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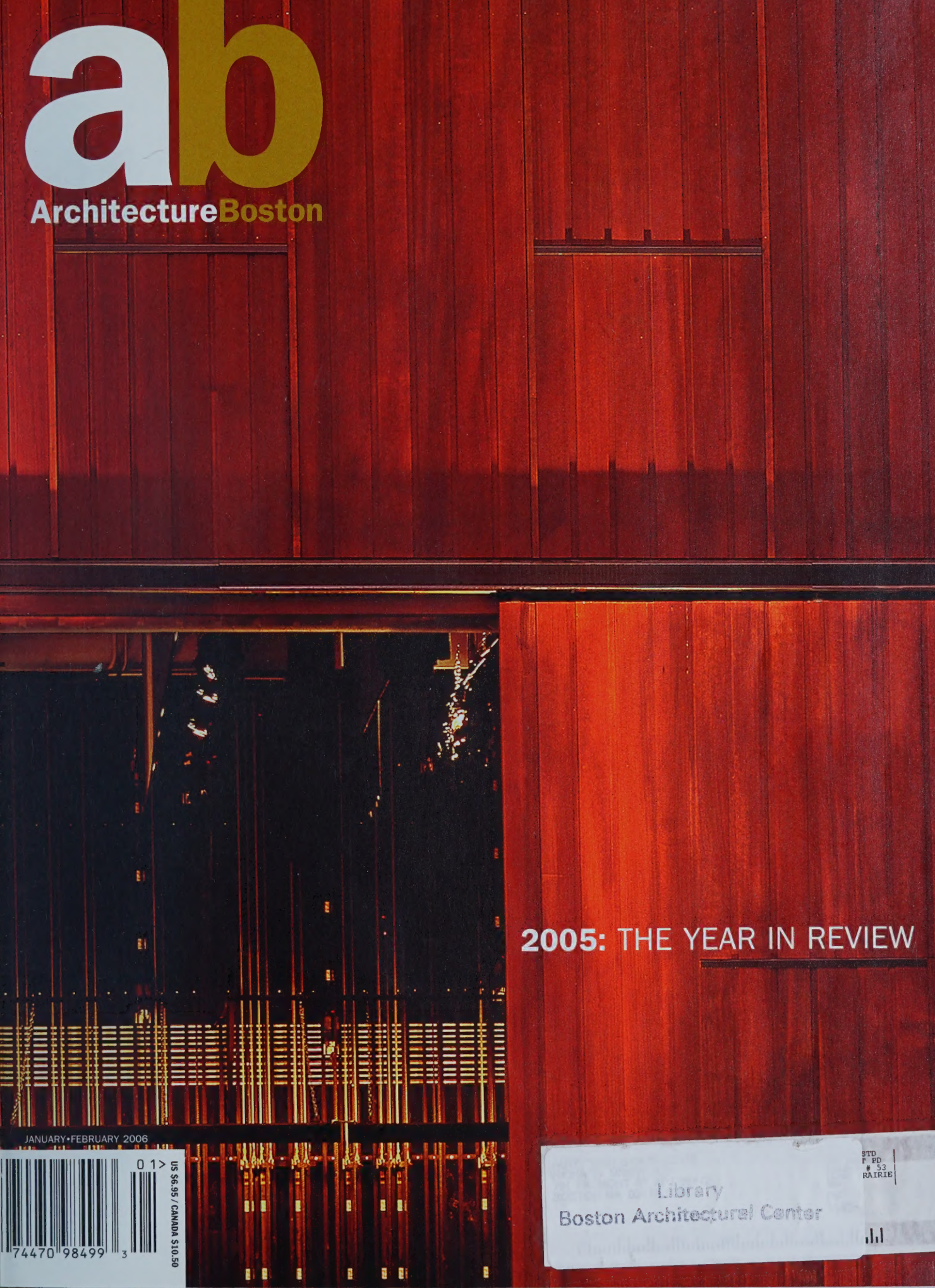

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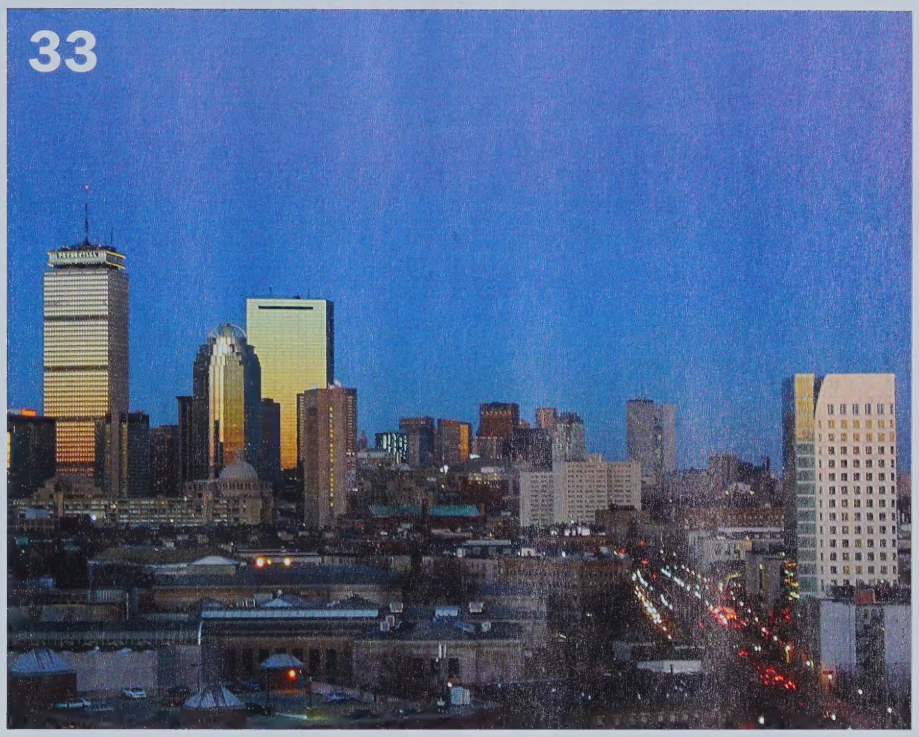

Building at far right: Northeastern University's College of Computer and Information Science and Residence Hall.

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ArchitectureBoston is mailed to members of the Boston Society of Architects and AIA members in New England and New York City. Subscription rate for others is $26 per year. Call 617.951.1433 x228 or e-mail architectureboston@architects.org.

ArchitectureBoston is custom published bimonthly for the Boston Society of Architects by The Pohly Company.
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The redesign of *ArchitectureBoston* was supported by a grant from the Graham Foundation.

ArchitectureBoston invites story ideas that connect architecture to social, cultural, political, and economic trends. Editorial guidelines are at: www.architectureboston.com. *ArchitectureBoston* assumes no liability for unsolicited materials. The views expressed in *ArchitectureBoston* are not necessarily those of the editorial staff, the Boston Society of Architects, or The Pohly Company.

Postmaster
Send changes of address to
ArchitectureBoston
52 Broad Street
Boston, MA 02109
ISSN 1099-6346

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The New Orleans Watershed

Just as the aftermath of the tragedy of 9/11 brought new and widespread public attention to architecture, so has the aftermath of Katrina brought unprecedented public attention to planning. Suddenly everyone knows how to read the map of New Orleans. And with that new literacy comes a heightened understanding of the many intricate ways in which topography, history, economics, class, and politics affect the way a city looks. The physical essence of a city frequently has little to do with the details that command the attention of design review boards.

For the people of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, there is no comfort in knowing that the world has seen other disasters. Natural disasters, such as the 1730 tsunami that struck Hokkaido, Japan, with a loss of 140,000 people and even the 1970 cyclone that hit Bangladesh, with an estimated loss of 300,000 to 500,000 lives, seem long ago and far away, those numbers of no consequence when one family member is missing now. The world has also seen other disasters caused by failures of civil engineering — such as the collapse of the Zuider Zee seawall in 1287 (50,000 lives lost) and the Johnstown Flood of 1889 (2,000 lives lost) — but the greater tragedy of New Orleans is not the failure of the levees but the human failure to maintain and replace them. Fires have devastated great cities, including London (1666), Chicago (1871), and Boston (1872); water-soaked structures that survived Katrina but require demolition only add to the cruelty of New Orleans' loss. The world has also seen horrific destruction that cannot be blamed on acts of God and nature. War has leveled communities both large and small, from Hiroshima to myriad settlements in Sudan that remain nameless in Western media. Less dramatic but more insidious is the destruction of cities by policy: devastating urban clearances in the name of renewal. This is the second tragedy that still threatens New Orleans.

An examination of disasters through history yields two comforting lessons: clusters of disasters are not signs of apocalypse; and devastation can hold the seeds of rebirth.

Urbanists are fond of biological metaphors to describe cities. "A city must grow or it will die" is one common but flawed aphorism. Although they may lose influence, cities seldom actually die. Understanding the lifecycle of the city and accepting that cities may assume different forms and functions over their history are still largely elusive concepts. The architectural and planning world has yet to produce its own Gail Sheehy — no one has written *Passages* for the city.

Perhaps because their own history is so short, Americans do not think of their cities in terms of historical strata. John Berendt's *The City of Falling Angels* describes Venice, a maritime trading center and the seat of the Venetian Empire in the 13th and 14th centuries, now a tourist center of only 70,000 people. There, excavations for a recent restoration project revealed not only the floor of Marco Polo's 13th-century house, 2 meters below grade, but also floor structures even lower, dating from the 11th, 8th, and 6th centuries.

"A city must grow or it will die" is one common but flawed aphorism.

The devastation of New Orleans presents immediate challenges, but it also offers the opportunity for planners to rethink their role. The last few decades have recast planners as economic development engineers working at the behest of politicians. The failed environmental policy and destruction of wetlands that contributed to losses along the Gulf Coast suggest a different model: planners as urban wellness professionals, holistically managing the health of the city over its lifetime. ■

Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA
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LESSON PLANS

A practitioner-educator braves more than two-dozen interviews in his quest to capture the zeitgeist of Boston's architecture schools

By Mark Pasnik

Fifth-year architecture students, Wentworth Institute of Technology.

As the birthplace of formal American architectural education, Boston seems reluctant to relinquish its claim to leadership. Fundamental shifts in direction here are shaping the future of design education. The five schools in town — Boston Architectural Center, Harvard, MIT, Northeastern, and Wentworth — are adapting to a changing profession, with its new technologies, internationalism, increased diversity, and interdisciplinary ideology. At the same time, they are facing renewed concerns about age-old questions of studio culture, internal politics, and pedagogy.

These shifts have occurred more rapidly in Boston, because the past two years have witnessed a significant turnover in the leadership of the five schools. MIT's School of Architecture and Planning has a new dean, Adèle Santos, and a new chair, Yung Ho Chang. The Boston Architectural Center has a new head of architecture, Jeff Stein. At the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Alan Altshuler was appointed the new dean. And Wentworth Institute of Technology has a new chair of its architecture department, Glenn Wiggins. Only Northeastern University has not seen change at the top lately and continues under the 15-year leadership of George Thrush. Recent interviews with more than two dozen administrators, faculty, students, and alumni paint a complex picture of radical change and evolutionary continuity, opportunities for growth, and the emergence of stronger architectural pedagogies.

POLITICS

According to the aphorism widely attributed to Henry Kissinger, university politics are so vicious precisely because the stakes are so small. Yet in Boston, people seem far from vicious and are instead tightlipped. Despite the code of academic freedom, interviewees took great care to avoid stating something impolitic about a current or former colleague. Off the record, faculty, alumni, and students were often more frank, describing difficulties with previous administrations: MIT's last dean focused on expanding the Media Lab and was therefore detached from the architecture program; Wentworth underwent a series of difficult transitions in its chairs; Northeastern experienced an unusual insider faculty appointment and departure.

The new leaders themselves cannot escape the political context. Alan Altshuler — no stranger to politics after serving as Massachusetts secretary of transportation in the early '70s and as dean of NYU's

Editor's note: Additional information about Boston's architecture schools and a PDF of this article are available online at www.architectureboston.com.

Graduate School of Public Administration — became the GSD's dean in a fog of university politics. Following a year-and-a-half term as interim dean, Altshuler was appointed in February 2005 by Harvard president Larry Summers, just a month after Summers' controversial remarks about women in the sciences. Design students were galvanized by the poor representation of women among tenured faculty at a school where approximately half the students are female. Altshuler recalls that the incident with the president "heightened consciousness of diversity issues." Despite this initial controversy, he has ironically proved to be a depoliticizing force, highly praised for his open-minded approach to leadership. Altshuler has won over initial skeptics, many of whom questioned a political scientist running a design school. He admits to a learning curve, even though he has held a longstanding joint faculty appointment at the GSD and the Kennedy School since 1988. Mindful of the GSD's legacy, Altshuler sees himself as an "instrument of continuity rather than radical change," one who nevertheless holds responsibility for renewing the school to face new challenges in the design fields.

INTERNATIONALISM

Architecture schools across the United States have been influenced by trends towards internationalism. While study-abroad programs and international students have become the norm, the Boston schools are developing more targeted initiatives. At Wentworth and the BAC, traditional European semesters are now complemented by new initiatives for co-ops in China; Wentworth is also developing alliances with schools in Venezuela and India, and the BAC also sends students to Cuba. At the graduate level, the GSD has long demonstrated leadership in its worldwide focus, not only with international faculty and students, but also with countless international studios, research initiatives, symposia, publications, and now even a course on managing a global practice.

MIT is undergoing a dramatic shift toward internationalism. By selecting Adèle Santos as dean and Yung Ho Chang as department head, the school is consciously attempting to raise its profile. Both are prominent international figures, she originally from South Africa, he from China. Chang was educated in the United States, where he taught for 11 years before returning to China to open Atelier FCJZ, the country's first studio practice. He calls himself a bridge-builder, and wants to make stronger links — including a year-round presence in China — between MIT and a "multi-centered, complex world." To accomplish this, he plans to transform his program, embracing the cross-departmental openness that typifies education in China, as he did when establishing a new architecture department at Peking University in Beijing. "I may say I am new here," Chang notes, "but the other way of looking at it is to see this place as a brand new school. That means that *everything* and *everyone* is new — from a person who has been here for 30 years to someone who has been here for three weeks."

INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

Internationalism has shaped the way the schools engage the outside world, but they are also transforming themselves internally through interdisciplinary initiatives. The schools are awakening to the fact that recent curricular changes — the emergence of theory as a distinct practice, the increased specialization of building technology, and advances in digital design tools — have all contributed to the creation of fiefdoms that must be opened up. At Northeastern, the department's mission is inherently interdisciplinary, merging issues of urbanism and architecture, while the agenda of the BAC is to integrate teaching and the workplace.

A similar bias has formed at Wentworth as well, where Glenn Wiggins became the architecture chair in the fall of 2003. Wiggins is a graduate of MIT's PhD program and a 15-year member of Wentworth's faculty. He has overseen a transformation of Wentworth's architecture curriculum and faculty simultaneously, with 12 of 23 faculty hired on his watch. These events happened in tandem, allowing a bottom-up interdisciplinary integration, particularly between building technology and design studios. Wiggins speaks of larger connections in the overhaul of the curriculum: "It allowed us to build links with other departments, so we reach out to the humanities, math, science, and the libraries, and work with them." While the school sometimes remains entrapped in a decade-old false perception as a tech program, Wiggins believes it will eventually come to be known for its current mission, an interdisciplinary design school that is "graduating people who understand how buildings go together."

At MIT and Harvard, an accomplished faculty already existed. Toshiko Mori, the architecture chair at Harvard, has tried to develop a "cohesive, more holistic way of looking at architecture." She has fostered an academic culture where, for example, Antoine Picon, a professor of the history of architecture and technology, is paired with the Pritzker Prize-winning practitioners Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron for a thesis studio. At MIT, Chang faces greater complexity in a department with five semi-autonomous disciplinary groups: architectural design; history-theory-criticism; visual arts; computation; and building technology. Chang claims to play the role of a Chinese chef doing stir-fry. He envisions new "mix labs" that provide a superstructure for the varied groups. The originating force behind this drive, however, is Adèle Santos, the first woman to be dean of the MIT School of Architecture and Planning. She came to MIT in January 2004, bringing experience as an accomplished practitioner, teacher, and administrator. Critics and fans alike see her as tough-minded, a trait that allowed her to stabilize problems with the old guard at MIT, where a philosophical disjunction between old and new faculty prior to her arrival made students fear that the school would revert to an anachronistic pedagogy. Santos has instead pushed the faculty toward interdisciplinary initiatives. "We've got this unusual galaxy," she observes. "It spreads broad and also deep. What we haven't done to date is really capitalize on the connections between the parts."

STUDIO CULTURE

All this attention to interdisciplinary work has heightened pressure on the design studio — the heart of the architectural curriculum and the place where much of this integration will occur. Undergraduates at both Northeastern and Wentworth generally report a healthy, if intense, studio atmosphere, complemented by co-op

semesters that extend their learning to professional environments as well.

At the graduate level, the standards for studio culture are quite different. A 2004 student survey at the GSD painted a darker picture of an atmosphere in which work expectations were considered overwhelming and unhealthy. Although a faculty committee has since proposed initiatives designed to counteract this problem, one student still wryly observes that disgruntlement can be one of the stronger sources of commonality at the GSD. Yet the report also found students were satisfied with their GSD education and felt it brought great rewards: an unmatched roster of international architects; an overhauled curriculum that by all accounts has been an enormous success; and excellent job-hunting prospects.

MIT's studio environment, according to recent graduates and current students, has suffered from fragmentation and lack of cohesion. Santos and Chang are taking on the problem, trying to congeal the discipline groups around the design studios. It is a task that requires sensitivity. While this fragmentation disenfranchises some students, self-motivated ones can experiment and excel, taking advantage of the program's diversity of ideas and faculty specializations.

The studio model is quite different at the BAC, where chair Jeff Stein took charge of the architecture department in December 2004. Stein is a product of the school, and he returns to his alma mater after 15 years as a professor at Wentworth. He plans to keep the BAC close to its mission of providing architectural education to a broad range of people. Students enroll in a concurrent academic and practice curriculum. They spend 40 hours each week in a professional workplace, while academic studios, taught by nearly 300 practicing professionals who volunteer their time, occur only once per week. Stein's enthusiasm for this model of learning is clear. "Every firm in Boston is a teaching firm," he notes, drawing a parallel to the tradition of teaching hospitals in the medical profession. "And that's not true in almost any other place in the country. It makes for a really vibrant architecture culture in the workplace in this city."

Architecture studio, Gund Hall, Harvard Graduate School of Design.

COLLABORATION AND DIFFERENCE

Despite some of the ongoing difficulties surrounding change and growth, architectural education in Boston has never been stronger. The new deans and department heads are refocusing their architecture programs, responding to contemporary issues of practice and the circumstantial issues of their educational niches. What seems less convincing, however, is the way in which the five schools relate to one another. Ted Landsmark, president-elect of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture and president of the BAC, may have some bearing on this in the future, by turning the collaborative focus of the ACSA on Boston. But for the moment, the schools have little to do with one another in any structured fashion. As a graduate of the GSD and now director of Northeastern's school of architecture, George Thrush has a long familiarity with the local scene and offers a realistic assessment: "We often imagine that because the schools are near one another, they would collaborate more; but the schools would collaborate more if they had more in common. Maybe it's fine that they don't." In growing his own department into a full-fledged school and instituting a master's degree, Thrush has been directing the "urban architecture" program toward collaboration not with other schools, but with communities, regulatory bodies, and developers. He is making Northeastern a kind of design-based policy institute with a mission to study the "pragmatics of the city."

Who can argue against collaboration? But Thrush's point about the collaboration among schools in Boston is more complex. They do have a vibrant but unstructured exchange — for example, adjunct faculty at Wentworth, the BAC, and Northeastern are often drawn from the graduating classes at MIT and Harvard. And many faculty members enjoy friendships and professional affiliations with their colleagues at other institutions. If greater cooperation indeed requires commonality, then such a shift might undermine what is the greatest strength of Boston's architecture schools: that each has a vastly different agenda. Boston prospers as a seat of architectural education because of this intense variety of ideas, from the very pragmatic to the most avant-garde. It offers prospective students real choices. And because the schools are contained within such a narrow radius, informal cross-fertilization is inevitable, as long as the new leadership is receptive to outside influences. Much like the interdisciplinary possibilities at MIT, what remains to be seen is how mean a stir-fry we can now cook up in Beantown. ■

Mark Pasnik is principal at over,under and an assistant professor of architecture at Wentworth Institute of Technology. He has taught at Northeastern University, the Rhode Island School of Design, and the California College of the Arts.

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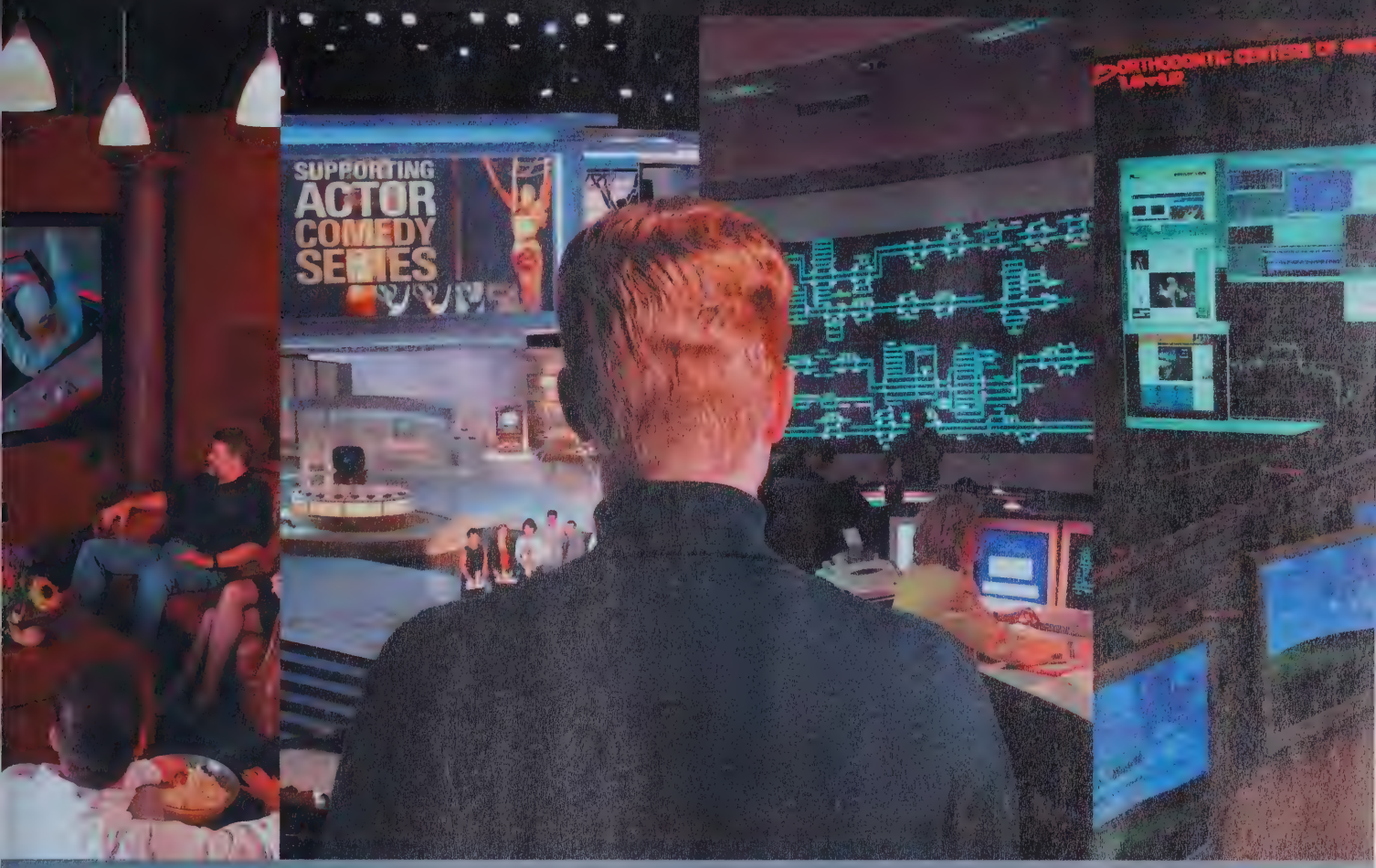

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BeenThere

Dominus Winery

Yountville, California, Herzog & de Meuron

After years of travel back and forth to visit my daughter in San Francisco, the time had come for a trip to Napa Valley to see the Dominus Winery, designed 10 years ago by Swiss architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, winners of the 2001 Pritzker Prize. As we arrived at the front gate, where we were instructed to proceed on foot, I could hear my daughter and wife say those familiar words, in that tone that all architects must endure: "Here we go again — another vacation with Lee, and we are looking at buildings."

But the first glance at the Dominus Winery building, still hundreds of feet in front of us, took our breath away. There, growing out of the dry, rocky Napa soil, was the building's formidable façade, a 300-foot-long expanse, 30 feet high, made of dark basalt rocks contained in steel mesh gabions — an inexpensive building technique usually reserved for highway and waterway construction. This huge black smudge across the landscape was interrupted only for a moment by a large rectangular opening for trucks, allowing a view through to the green vineyards beyond on the higher terrain. It was a stunning visual paradox: the black building stretching across the sun-drenched vineyard seemed to absorb the light. The dark two-dimensional façade became for an instant little more than a neutral surface upon which the framed view to the hills beyond appeared as a Technicolor image projected on a movie screen.

Inside, another astonishing visual juxtaposition became evident: the black gabion wall encloses only the rooms involved in the wine making; the spaces occupied by the executives of the winery are wrapped in transparency — an elegantly detailed glass wall constructed within the shelter of the massive rock box. This is the sort of elegance of materiality we have come to expect from Herzog and de Meuron, and it's hard to imagine it could have been done any better than here in Napa Valley. The building is at once of and in the landscape in a way that few buildings ever achieve and it is masterful. Even my wife and daughter agree. ■

Leland D. Cott FAIA is a principal of Bruner/Cott and Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts and an adjunct professor of urban design at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Five designers (and one photographer) from the Boston area hit the road — and come back with opinions

Swiss Re Headquarters

London, Foster and Partners

Norman Foster has built a 600-foot tower that is known by everyone in London as the Gherkin.

Foster's design for the insurance company Swiss Re is full of radical and brilliant innovations. The structural system is a Buckminster Fuller-like grid of contrasting colors — an enormous high-tech argyle sock. The tower is round in plan and has a tapered, gently curved profile that diffuses wind gusts at the ground level. Since the external structure is diagonally braced, the floors are column-free, with lots of windows that actually open.

The interior of the building is even more inventive. The exoskeleton allows for a series of spiraling atria, giving workers views to other parts of the building. The atria also serve as "lungs" for the building. They draw fresh air through panels in the double-skinned façade, vastly reducing the cooling requirements. In 2004, the building was awarded the Stirling Prize by the Royal Institute of British Architects.

It wasn't until I went to London to take some photographs of the new tower that I began to understand what bothered me about the design.

The building is violently anti-urban. It ignores the rich urban fabric in which it sits. It is exactly the same shape from every angle. It looks like a space ship that could have landed anywhere, but has unfortunately found the wrong site.

Swiss Re is located at 30 St. Mary Axe, in the old City of London, where remnants of the Roman wall pop up next to Victorian pubs and Modernist towers from the 1970s. The City bustles, and like Boston's downtown, its street pattern is crazy. It is one of the most humanistic financial districts anywhere, if such a thing is possible.

The high-tech spirals of the Gherkin are alien to everything around it. It is a huge rounded bullet, an apt metaphor for the violence it perpetrates on the lively character of its neighborhood. Its aggressively phallic form is willful and arrogant. Tall buildings don't have to be this way. The Hancock Tower in Boston is abstract but is constantly changing in both shape and color. I know I am in the South End when the Hancock looks skinny.

Swiss Re's pièce de résistance is a glass bubble in the peak, which has 360-degree, column-free views of the city and a curved oculus at its peak. But don't try to go there — it's private.

I want tall buildings to respond to the environment. I think green design should be the next Big Thing that shapes our buildings. But I want them to look like something other than Flash Gordon's rocket pod. Great cities deserve better. ■

Peter Vanderwarker is an architectural photographer in Newton, Massachusetts.

Tinguely Museum

Basel, Switzerland, Mario Botta Architetto

Swimming is not normally the mode of transportation associated with architectural tourism. But why not? Imagine yourself floating down the Charles: you'd have great views of the cityscapes of Cambridge and Boston, with a green band of parklands in the foreground. Urban river swimming is a passion of mine, so I regularly dip in European rivers to see how this most democratic of all water sports can enrich the quality of city life.

While visiting Basel, Switzerland, for the 25th annual Rhine Swim, I ventured out on one of my aquatic explorations and discovered new perspectives on a familiar friend: the Tinguely Museum, which sits right on the Rhine.

I knew the land-side of the museum: Using smooth reddish stone, Swiss architect Mario Botta created an imposing and dignified environment to showcase the oeuvre of Jean Tinguely (1925-1991). The kinetic sculptor's smile-inducing, water-spitting creations mark key public spaces in this city known for its great art collections (two other Modern art museums — the Beyeler, designed by Renzo Piano, and the Schaulager, designed by Herzog & de Meuron — offer additional reasons to visit this very livable city). Here, Tinguely's work joins pieces by artists such as Niki de Saint Phalle and Marcel Duchamp. The museum's two street façades present solid, fort-like fronts, a vocabulary familiar to those who have seen some of Botta's other large civic commissions, which include the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Inside, temporary exhibition galleries and an elegant café contribute to the liveliness of this versatile art palace.

But it was the waterfront façade that captured my attention during that morning swim. I particularly loved the dramatic, cantilevered glass gallery. This expansive pathway connects floors and allows great vistas of the Rhine and the city beyond. A covered portico and dramatic arches lead the visitor into a sculpture garden where modern classics mingle with magnificent mature trees. A small path invites one to descend all the way to the river's edge. Unlike many older urban buildings that turn their backs to riverfronts, the Tinguely embraces it and in so doing, makes the river itself a richer public space.

As a river buff, I recommend packing your bathing suit and enjoying an architectural dip. Also visit Bern, Geneva, Zurich. Their river and lakefronts all offer special lessons for our own Charles River: swimming and active shores bring great livability. ■

Renata von Tscharner is the president and founder of the Charles River Conservancy. Born in Switzerland, she is a city planner trained as an architect.

Seattle Public Library

Seattle, Rem Koolhaas (OMA with LMN Architects)

I didn't want to like it.

I'm generally suspicious of hype (still haven't read *Harry Potter*), and I am tired of this "starchitect" thing. But…since I was in Seattle *anyway*, and because I teach, I felt I had a responsibility to visit Rem Koolhaas' new Seattle Public Library.

In a way, this is a story of disappointed expectations. I expected it to seem completely foreign to its context. I expected to get lost inside, or at least turned around. I expected to need to wear my "intellectually I understand the concept behind this" hat. In all cases, I was disappointed.

In photos, it's overly clunky, like a faceted lump in a fishnet. In person, the structure is surprisingly transparent and delicate. That metal fishnet reads as if someone has taken the façade from one of the surrounding nondescript office towers, and twisted and stretched it into this small sculpture. While the library clearly establishes its own presence, in the context of the city, it seems surprisingly small.

But the inside feels grand. Two-story and three-story spaces demonstrate the civic nature of this place, much like the Boston Public Library's century-old Bates reading room. Yet the Seattle library is undeniably different — with recycled flooring, aluminum finishes, grass-patterned carpets, and triple-paned glass, the building is entirely of the spirit of our time. It's as if the BPL now has a playmate, not an offspring.

This is a building that can't be understood from diagrams. Drawings and maps make the library more confusing than it actually is. Deep colors organize the interior spaces and highlight a clear path. At every level and every turn, visitors are oriented toward views of Elliott Bay, Mount Rainier, or the city.

Seattle is known for innovative thinking in many areas — technology, coffee, online book sales — but not architecture. How on earth did this make it through?

It's appropriate, perhaps, that this commentary on the future of the library is playing out in Seattle, where Microsoft has spawned a generation of young millionaires and sprouted our current electronic age (the end of the book?), while across town, Amazon has used the same Internet to prove that hard copy books are far from obsolete.

Perhaps most importantly, the new library encourages a completely simple, emotional response; it doesn't require advanced architectural degrees or lectures in art history to appreciate it. I asked my brother, the geologist, for his reaction. He said that the paths in library stacks are narrow, but otherwise, it's cool.

Indeed. ■

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA, directs the architecture studios at Smith College and is a designer at Rogers Marvel Architects in New York City.

Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe

Berlin, Germany, Eisenman Architects

"The children of the killers are not killers. We must never blame them for what their elders did. But we can hold them responsible for what they do with the memory of their elder's crime."

— Elie Wiesel

In the shadow of the most heinous of all crimes, the German people have something to be truly proud of: the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. It is not perfect, and yet, that it exists at all is something of a miracle. Despite two design competitions and 17 years of fierce debates, political challenges, and inevitable compromises, today the Memorial bears witness in the heart of Berlin.

Between the Brandenberg Gate and Potsdammer Platz, Peter Eisenman and Richard Serra designed a city block of 2,711 stele (concrete blocks measuring roughly 3 feet by 8 feet and ranging in height up to 15 feet along an undulating ground plane). The edge of the memorial functions as a superb public space. Berliners on their lunch breaks picnic amid photo-happy tourists while young children race about in a game of hide-and-go-seek beyond their wildest dreams. As you venture deeper into the field the trees thin out, the stele get higher and the ground plane begins to sink beneath you. At some indiscernible moment you are all alone.

The abstract nature of the field is essential; there is no intended symbolism, no superficial numerology. It strips the memorial bare so that all that is left is personal experience: a place to think, rather than be told what to think, as Eisenman puts it. The monument has been carefully dimensioned such that it may only be explored individually, never collectively, a conceptual leap in monument-design.

An information center provides the didactic core that many felt was missing from the abstract memorial. The sober exhibition design by Dagmar von Wilcken respectfully disarms Eisenman's fussy formal gestures. The undulating ceiling and his tired shifted grids ran the risk of feeling inappropriate in a space charged with such a solemn function.

In fact, the architectural handling of the information center presents the only major blunder in an otherwise superb project. Eisenman, who was forced to add it mid-way, tried to hide the center by burying it underground. Unfortunately, the result is an absurd number of dead ends to make way for exit stairs, to say nothing of the gaping hole of a main entrance, stele used as ventilation shafts and an ungainly elevator core that takes on an unforgivable prominence as the tallest and largest object on the entire site. Surely, burying the center within the field should have been reconsidered after the umpteenth, "oh, that, well...just put up another handrail...."

Had Eisenman stayed true to his intention of keeping the field abstract and pure, he could have found a more sympathetic siting of the information center and allowed both to coexist without distraction. And then he would have something to be even more proud of. ■

Coryn Kempster, a candidate for the M.Arch. degree at MIT, is currently interning for Barkow Leibinger Architeckten in Berlin.

Rachofsky House
Dallas, Texas, Richard Meier & Partners

Chinati Foundation
Marfa, Texas, Donald Judd

On the road to Marfa, Texas, a place so far in the middle of nowhere that the road feels even longer, straighter, flatter, and hotter than it really is, I took a detour that ultimately led me closer to my destination.

I stopped in Dallas to spend some time at the Rachofsky House, designed by Richard Meier in the mid '90s as a residence for two art collectors who later donated it to the Dallas Museum of Art. What I found there, captivating me far more than the house, was Robert Irwin's *Tilted Planes of Grass and Steel* — four panels of grass and Cor-Ten steel embedded in the Rachofsky's front lawn. The piece is so subtle that it requires a double-take to realize its scale and seismic effect rising from the pristine lawn. There's a rich ambiguity in the work because it is site specific but not site friendly. When viewed from within the upper floors of the house, it appears to be engaged in a dialogue with Meier, deviously challenging the established order of both the house and the landscape. *Tilted Planes* is a great work of minimalism, crystal clear in both concept and formal resonance.

That sense of heightened clarity stayed with me as I continued my journey. The Chinati Foundation in Marfa, a minimalist juggernaut in the middle of West Texas, was the home and studio of founder Donald Judd, and is now a museum also featuring work by Dan Flavin, John Chamberlain, and others. It's hard to get there — imagine *Planes, Trains and Automobiles* meets *High Plains Drifter* — but by the time I finally did, my thirst for the place was raging. Visiting Marfa is like stepping into an alternate reality — one that is oddly suited to the work there. The West Texas landscape has an infinite and low horizon covered by a giant Texas sky.

I've been an admirer of Judd for a long time, but nothing prepared me for the experience of Marfa, particularly the two converted military barracks that house only his collection of sequential aluminum boxes. When cast in the desert light, they become almost transparent, disappearing into themselves and the surrounding landscape — space and object all morphed into one. While in the barracks, I understood on a very visceral level that Judd's language of industrial-age minimalism had both cultural and contextual relevance. I saw minimalism as a universal language — one that was liberated from any immediate influence, including Judd's other work in other contexts.

In Texas, both Judd and Irwin resonate in a way like no other. Perhaps the landscape itself has an inherent minimalism. I can recommend Marfa. It's a great road trip. ■

Nick Winton AIA is a principal of Anmahian Winton Architects in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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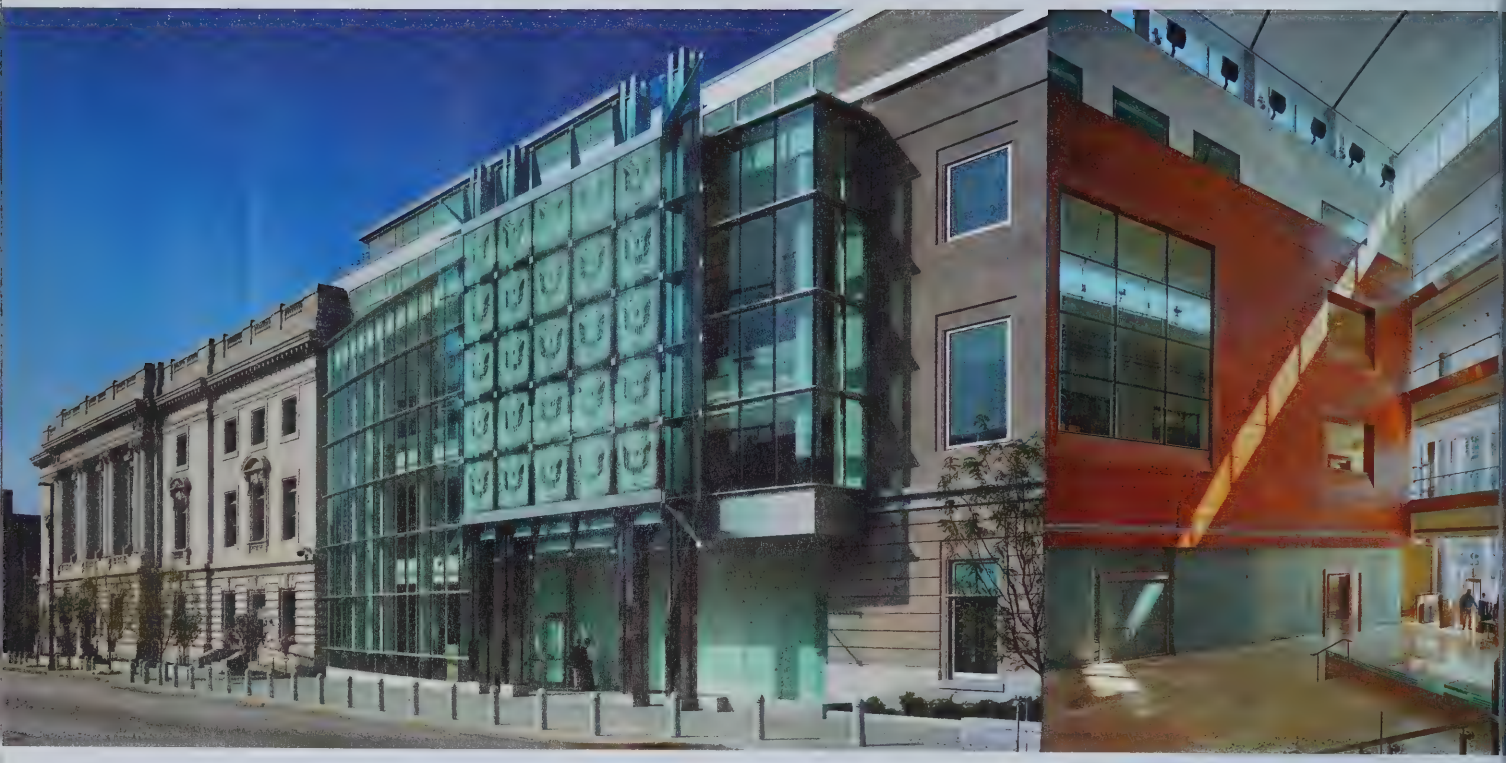

Above, left to right: Federal Courthouse, Wheeling, West Virginia (2005). Interior view of courthouse. Opposite page, from left: Trinity Church, Boston, New Undercroft/Commons (2005). The Barker Center, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (1997).

civic engagement

Joan Goody FAIA, recipient, 2005 BSA Award of Honor, talks with Rebecca Barnes FAIA

Joan E. Goody FAIA is the recipient of the 2005 Boston Society of Architects Award of Honor, in recognition of her contributions to the profession and to the community. A principal of Goody Clancy, she has directed a wide range of academic, public, commercial, and preservation projects as well as residential projects such as Harbor Point — the transformation of New England's largest public-housing project into a successful, mixed-income residential community. The chair of the Boston Civic Design Commission from 1995–2005, she serves on the faculty of the Mayor's Institute for City Design and has served as the chair of the AIA National Honor Awards and the Presidential Urban Design Awards. She received degrees from Cornell and the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Rebecca G. Barnes FAIA is the director of strategic growth at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. She served as chief planner for the city of Boston from 2001–2005. A past president of the Boston Society of Architects, she was also a Loeb Fellow. She received degrees from Brown University and the University of Oregon.

Rebecca Barnes: You are today one of Boston's leading architects; it seems unnecessary to point out that you are also one of Boston's leading female professionals. But you started out in a time when women architects were a rarity. It must have been daunting. Whatever gave you the drive to pursue this field?

Joan Goody: My upbringing was a little unusual for someone of my generation. I was brought up in Brooklyn, the only child of an engineer-father who assumed I would be interested in how things were made and taught me accordingly. Even at a young age, I was designing houses. The elementary school I went to was "progressive" — for example, we didn't have home economics, we had shop.

Rebecca Barnes: What did you make in shop?

Joan Goody: Many things — including a collapsible drafting table.

Rebecca Barnes: You went through design school at a time when there weren't many models for young women, and certainly very few women architects practicing in Boston.

Joan Goody: Very few who were already established — Sally Harkness was one, but I didn't know her. And there weren't many even in my own peer group — perhaps three or four women in my class of 40 at Harvard.

Rebecca Barnes: At the time, Harvard probably thought that was great.

Joan Goody: I don't think they thought about it at all. There was one woman on the faculty, a planner. And I know there were people who assumed that women couldn't possibly be serious. But I have had one great blessing — it never occurred to me that anybody might not think women were just fine. A lot of slights that could have upset me, had I been a little more sensitive, just went right by.

Rebecca Barnes: Why do you think you were oblivious to that attitude?

Joan Goody: My family simply assumed I could do it. Also, I had graduated from a co-ed university [Cornell] where the women were in fact brighter than the men — there were 10 men to every four women, so the selection process was more competitive for women. I thought men were nice. Decorative. Not always bright.

Koch Biology Building, MIT, Cambridge Massachusetts (1994).

So I was never intimidated. I was a good student at Harvard, and I was accepted for that. Had I been mediocre, I might have had a harder time. I also had some wonderful teachers, Serge Chermayeff among them. He led the first-year studio, combining architecture, planning, and landscape architecture. I think it was there that I began to see architecture more as narrative than as sculpture — as something shaped by and for the lives of its users.

Rebecca Barnes: When people leave design school, they often enter a brave new world, unlike what they were led to expect. Without the benefit of role models, it must have been even more difficult for you to translate your education into a working life.

Joan Goody: Shortly after I graduated, I married Marvin Goody, who was then a professor of architecture at MIT. I had the opportunity to work in what was at that time a six-person office that Marvin had opened five years earlier. John Clancy had just been made a partner, and I had them both as very supportive mentors. The firm did a variety of work, including houses and some additions. I was lucky to be in a young practice. I grew as the office grew, so the commissions got larger as I became more mature.

Rebecca Barnes: It's extraordinary to think of the evolution of that firm. You have been involved in its management and growth over the course of your entire professional life. It's not a leap to think of it as another creation, a work of art in a sense.

Joan Goody: And considered that way, also a source of pride and affection. Our firm was always very family-like. Anybody who worked there was a person, not a body. We have different personalities, but many shared values. And one of the fundamental shared values of the firm from the beginning was a support of civic involvement by our staff.

Rebecca Barnes: One of the things I noticed first when I came to Boston to live and work was how involved architects were in civic activities — in fact, architects were often helping to create them.

Joan Goody: It is amazing. Boston architects clearly compete with one another, yet there's a strong camaraderie among the group.

Rebecca Barnes: Who or what is responsible for the incredible congeniality in the Boston architectural community? The BSA helps to nourish it, but it certainly goes back well beyond the current constituency of the organization.

Joan Goody: What comes to my mind is the old gentlemen, architects like Jim Lawrence and Nelson Aldrich. When the Boston City Hall competition was won by these two young architects, Kallmann and McKinnell, Nelson Aldrich's firm agreed to work with them, surely not to make his name or his fortune, but because he thought it was the right thing to do. Jim Lawrence, who had a small architecture firm, believed deeply in the project, and he supported it with his moral authority. And until he died a few years ago, he was trying desperately to get the city to maintain the building, even simply to change the light bulbs in that big space, because he thought it was such a pity that it wasn't being kept up.

Rebecca Barnes: It would be a good thing for someone to endow some day. But even if city leaders had the money, they'd also need the will. It needs an endowment like the Brown Fund, which enables wonderful things that the city would not otherwise do.

Joan Goody: Yes. And I would say that the Brown Fund is an example of the same civic culture. Also, the George Robert White Fund and maybe even the BSA itself. They are the continuation of the Yankee sense of *noblesse oblige* that dates back to the end of the 19th century, when Symphony Hall and the Museum of Fine Arts were built.

Rebecca Barnes: The Boston Public Library, too.

Joan Goody: I can remember when Marvin, who was also from New York, was chair of the Arts Commission. He was walking home with a fellow commissioner, an old Yankee, who said to him, "It's wonderful what you do for us." Now, this is our Boston; "us" is all of us. But who was it who believed their draftsmen should be able to become architects and so started a school [the Boston Architectural Center] and then volunteered to teach there — all in order to make that happen? Old Yankee architects. One of the things I love about Boston is that it's a size that allows you to feel that you can make a difference. And I suspect that contributes to the vitality of civic life here.

Rebecca Barnes: There also seems to be a tight fit between the civic/cultural life of the city and its physical character. The culture is reflected in the architectural history.

Joan Goody: In Boston, when you pass a building, you practically rub shoulders with it — it becomes personal. When Bostonians think of the Old State House or Faneuil Hall, they're affectionate about them. That has definitely had an influence on how we think about our city.

Rebecca Barnes: Your own work has shaped the city in many ways. Are there projects that you feel really pushed the limits or somehow managed to achieve something different?

Joan Goody: I've done a number of housing developments, primarily mixed-income. My goal has always been to make subsidized housing look as "normal" as possible. So at Harbor Point, for example, we went to great lengths to find forms and colors and details that bespoke the traditions of the neighborhood, so that the new place looked like it belonged, and the residents felt like they belonged. And we tried to have variety — we kept a third of the existing buildings, so that the development didn't look like it all came from one hand at one moment.

Rebecca Barnes: You also designed two downtown Boston office buildings: 265 Franklin and 99 Summer — the building most people know as the one with the red hat. I've always wondered about the inspiration for the red color.

Joan Goody: I had been looking at the United Shoe Building and the terra cotta tower top at Trinity Church, both of which are colorful. It seemed to me to that rich colors had some precedent in Boston, and because of the way 99 Summer built up to a stepped-back top, it wanted a proper cap. What's so interesting about a lot of old city skylines — which you see in Paris and other European cities — is the crenellations at the ridge of the roof, which, if properly done, help define the building's silhouette. I used them at 99 Summer Street. In a funny way, the red top made some people very fond of the building, but that wasn't why I did it.

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"Boston is a size that allows you to feel that you can make a difference. And I suspect that contributes to the vitality of civic life here."

— Joan Goody FAIA

Rebecca Barnes: You referred to architecture as narrative rather than sculpture. It's hard to imagine achieving that quality with office towers, given their relatively strict cost parameters. The designer is typically charged with maximizing efficiency, not maximizing the narrative of people's daily lives.

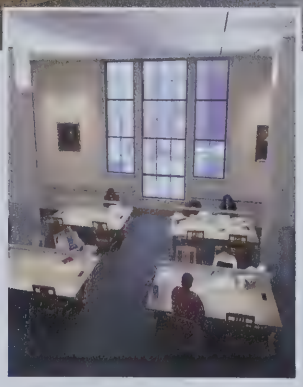
Joan Goody: For me, the most important aspect of both those buildings — 265 Franklin and 99 Summer — is the lobby/atriums inside. What has interested me has been the spaces that buildings create, more than the buildings themselves. I imagined the buildings as spaces where people don't merely pass through, but stop to chat and meet with friends and co-workers — their town square.

Rebecca Barnes: That also comes through loud and clear in the State Transportation Building.

Joan Goody: Which is perhaps the most mixed-use single building in Boston! The public areas have always been very open and democratic, unlike fancier private office buildings. Students from the New England School of Law, across the street, and now from Emerson, too, use it as a kind of student center. We were hired as the architects before a site had been selected. I think we looked at 15 possible sites, but Fred Salvucci, who was then the state secretary of transportation, believed that this site represented the opportunity to revitalize what was a very downtrodden area. It was known mostly for the old Continental Trailways bus terminal and the Hillbilly Ranch, a one-story building of no particular distinction where you could actually hear some very good hillbilly music.

Rebecca Barnes: You recently completed your tenure as chair of the Boston Civic Design Commission, a position that you held for 10 years. As much as anyone, you have had the role of caretaker of Boston's urban aesthetic. You have seen all kinds of projects come through. From that unique perspective, what is your perception of where we are, and where we're going?

Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study,
Harvard University,
Schlesinger Library Renovation



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Joan Goody: Since the commission is advisory to the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and since the mayor can overrule any decision, it is very dependent on the mayor. A mayor who respects the role and who chooses a BRA director with strong feelings about the shape and character of the city can really use the commission well. Over the course of my years there, I've seen a variety of attitudes toward the commission, and I think its success has hinged to some extent on how it's received above. But what impressed me probably as much as anything is the devotion of the people on that commission. For the most part, the members have been quite selfless, giving their time, which can amount to several hours a week, but also not grandstanding or trying to push their own agendas. They were motivated by a genuine concern about Boston.

Its role is more than just listening to the testimony of the immediate neighbors, but to think about the city as a whole. Sometimes a developer might try to cut a deal with a neighborhood: I'll create another 100 parking spaces in my garage for you parking-space-starved people if you won't object to my adding four stories to the building. The BCDC has to think beyond the neighborhood, and at the same time be sensitive to the neighborhood.

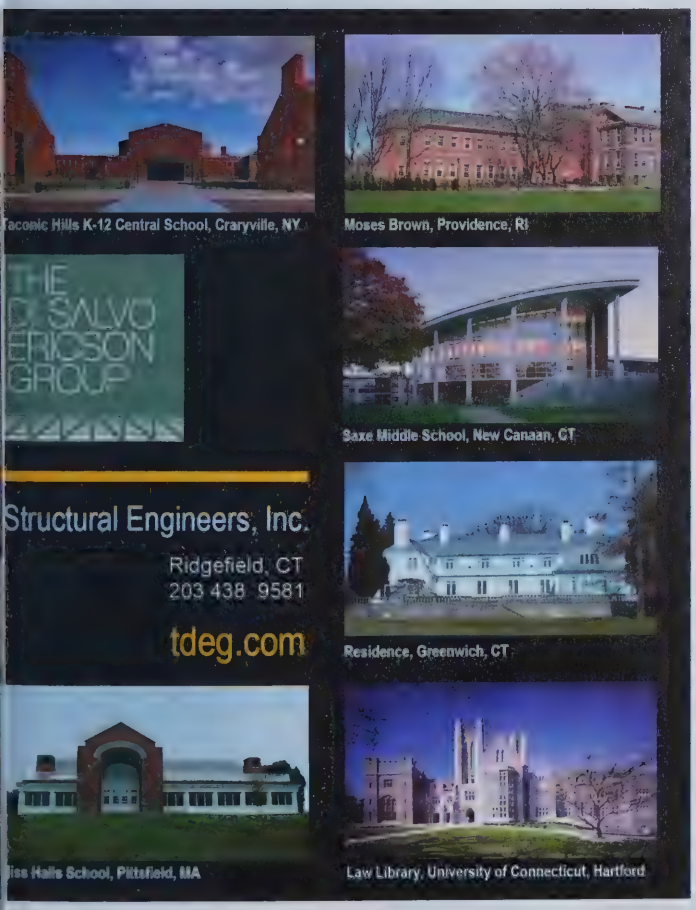
Rebecca Barnes: What would you say the biggest challenges are?

Joan Goody: One problem in Boston is that zoning gets no respect. We were so enthusiastic in the '90s when we rezoned all of Boston. To my horror, I discovered that, even with updated zoning, a developer can make a proposal that might be totally unrelated to the zoning but would still be taken seriously at City Hall. No one would demand that the project be withdrawn and resubmitted to conform to the height or density restrictions.

Rebecca Barnes: It's as though zoning is just a guideline.

Joan Goody: If we even had guidelines, we might be better off. But it's a problem when

Heaton Court Senior Housing, Stockbridge, Massachusetts (1978).



a 300-foot building appears on a site that's zoned for a 100 feet or less, on a corner that's very busy, on narrow downtown streets, with a 500-car parking garage beneath it.

The good thing is that we were able to have a positive influence on developers who came with an idea but were amenable to change. I think the role of the BCDC is to do more than judge the proportions of the windows; it has to be allowed to talk about overall mass and density in relation to the surroundings. Its role is to evaluate the impact of a project on the public realm, whether the public realm is the sidewalk, the street, the nearby park, or the skyline.

Rebecca Barnes: The BCDC's role is interesting to me; I don't think it's discussed much. Here is a group of mostly design-trained people who are working collaboratively to improve the quality of the project and the city. Yet I don't think most of us were taught architecture as a collaborative exercise — a lot of architects still have a Howard Roark view of the world.

Joan Goody: The "starchitect."

Rebecca Barnes: Yes. In great contrast to the BCDC's approach to design.

Joan Goody: The public wants to believe that the author of a design is a single person. *Time* magazine wants to feature Libeskind with the square glasses or Philip Johnson with the round glasses or Frank Lloyd Wright in a cape. People seem to want to believe that it's somebody who's a little different from them, a single entity who's an inspired genius.

Rebecca Barnes: Like believing in God.

Joan Goody: Exactly. And some of these people are geniuses. Clearly, when somebody of obvious talent, whether famous or not, presents a project, you look at it with different eyes; you try to see if that person has seen something you've missed and is relating to your city in a new way that you should be open to. But even some of the best-known architects have been particularly open to comments from the BCDC. I have often thought that the BCDC is the best friend of devoted and talented architects, because it can ask for things that their developer clients had rejected saying, "We can't afford that" or "We don't really want to try that." I saw it happen many times.

Rebecca Barnes: Your own buildings are part of the cityscape. You can turn a corner and see your own work every day. What's next?

Joan Goody: I think every architect always wants the next building to be the best one. And that's my goal. Those of us who build in the area in which we live have lots of opportunities to study what we've created: I got this right, but I got that wrong, and if only I had.... But this is an exciting time in Boston, because there is a new appreciation of good, interesting, innovative design and more of an opportunity to push the edges of the envelope. ■

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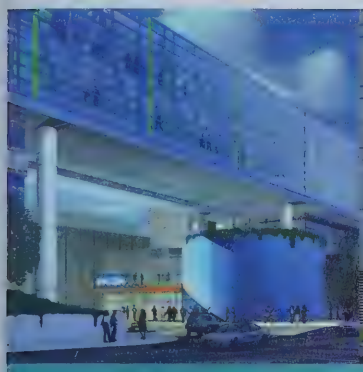

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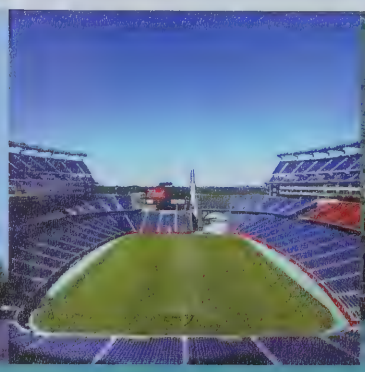

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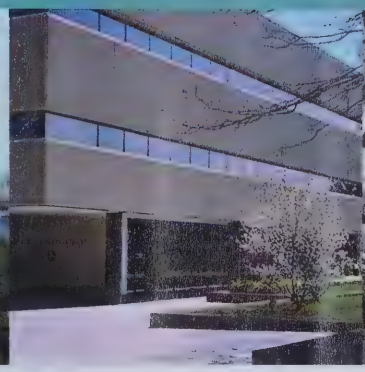

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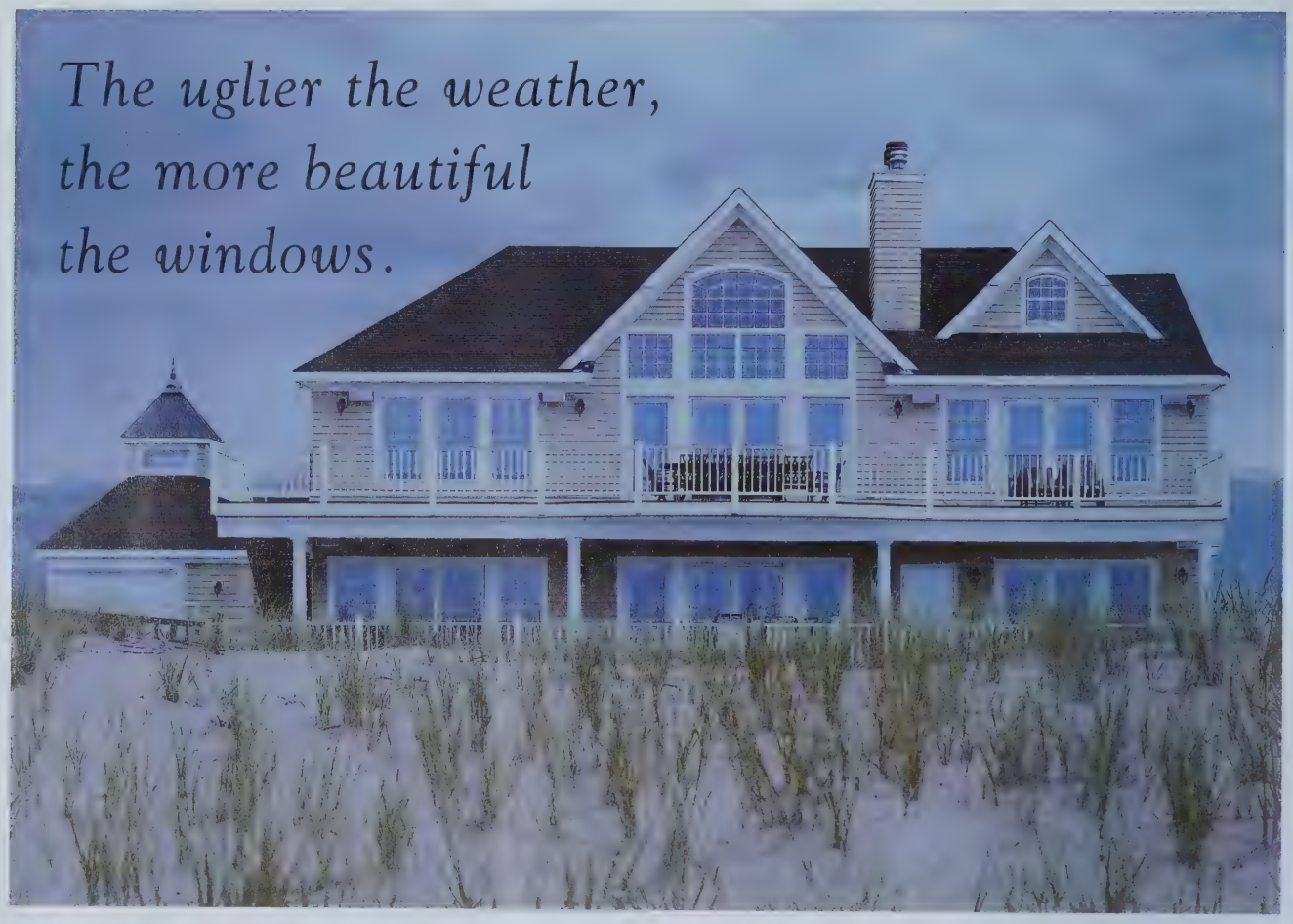

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2005
HARLESTON PARKER MEDAL

College of Computer and Information Science and Residence Hall, Northeastern University

WILLIAM RAWN ASSOCIATES

JURY:

Alex Anmahian AIA
Anmahian Winton Architects
Cambridge, Massachusetts
Chair

Marianne Ajemian, Esq.
Nutter, McClennen & Fish
Boston

Nicholas Baume
Institute of Contemporary Art
Boston

David Eisen AIA
Boston Herald
Abacus Architects and Planners
Allston, Massachusetts

Gary Hilderbrand FASLA
Reed Hilderbrand
Associates
Watertown, Massachusetts

George Metzger AIA
HMFH Architects
Cambridge, Massachusetts
(President, The Boston Society
of Architects)

Grant Rhode
GF Rhode Construction
Boston

Kairos Shen
Boston Redevelopment
Authority
Boston

Joan Wickersham
novelist/essayist
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Kyu Sung Woo FAIA
Kyu Sung Woo Architect
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Editor's note: The full text of jury comments may be found at www.architects.org/awards.

JURY COMMENTS:

The College of Computer and Information Science and Residence Hall at Northeastern University is a hybrid building consisting of a four-story facility for the College of Computer and Information Science at the base of an 18-story residential tower. It emerged as the strongest contender for the award because of its coherent expression and level of rigor at a multitude of scales: Equal attention has been given to the building's minute details, its place on the campus, and its place in the city. The stout metal-clad tower is masked by a relatively shallow one-room-deep glass frontispiece, which projects laterally in plan from the tower by a studied distance enabling light to flow through it. Additionally, the tower has been carved back at the upper floors to allow light to penetrate through the top of the glass frontispiece, setting it off from the mass of the building. The jury was impressed by the luminous quality of the frontispiece and its exquisite minimal detailing, both of which contribute to its iconographic expression. The subordinate massing and siting of the lower wing of the building, executed with equal care and consideration, further reinforces the inherent symbolic qualities of the frontispiece. The interiors are equally well conceived and promote a strong sense of community. The jury appreciated the deliberate effort made to establish activity behind the curtainwall — even at street level. The level of simplicity implicit in the concept and execution of the building, its success in unifying the disparate program elements, and the skill with which these concerns have been addressed contributed to the jury's unanimous decision to recommend this project for the Harleston Parker Medal: It satisfied the jury's collective definition of beauty.

2005 HARLESTON PARKER MEDAL
College of Computer and Information Science and Residence Hall
Northeastern University
Boston

Client:
Northeastern University

Architect:
William Rawn Associates
Boston
www.rawnarch.com

Project team:
William L. Rawn III FAIA (principal for design); Clifford V. Gayley AIA (associate principal for design); Samuel M. Lasky AIA (project architect); Mark L. Warner AIA (project manager); Matthew Stymiest; Victor Liu; Euiseok Jeong AIA; David Grissino, Assoc. AIA; Keith Schwarting; Saipriya Rao; Bruce Danzer AIA

Contractor:
Turner Construction Company

Consultants:
LeMessurier Consultants (structural); Cosentini Associates (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); Haley & Aldrich (geotechnical); Ripman Lighting Consultants (lighting); Pressley Associates (landscape)

Photographer:
Alan Karchmer (previous page and opposite)

Rarefied Atmospheres

By Bill Kirtz

Good-bye concrete block, hello glistening glass. Farewell spandex, welcome natural fibers. Not long ago, Northeastern University students had two designers: Polly and Esther. Now, they sip designer coffee and turn up the back of Brooks Brothers polo shirts. The school that started in 1898 in the old Berkeley Street YMCA for youths "from the humbler walks of life" has climbed almost as high as its tuition to a campus that lives up to its catalogue.

Up in the heights of the new dormitory tower known as Building H, they call it being "on the edge." The view explains why. From her triangled 12th-floor aerie off Huntington Avenue, NU senior Diana Leary surveys the Museum of Fine Arts, Fenway Park's Green Monster, and the sweep of Memorial Drive. It's a short distance but a vast socio-economic way from the Hemenway Street "crack house" she was wedged into four years ago during the university's housing shortage. Fellow senior Zack Bayrouty, in a similar five-person, four-bedroom suite on the seventh floor, sees Northeastern fulfilling its promise to be more than a linoleum-flecked commuter school. "There's definitely more of a residential culture, due to all the new buildings," he says. "People are happy to be here. I originally came here for the city, but now you see a hell of a campus. What you saw in the catalogues is actually coming true."

Northeastern is fulfilling its promise to be more than a linoleum-flecked commuter school.

As the alphabet soup of new buildings (from A to H in the last few years) expands, so have costs and expectations. The university's first students — many of them horsemen eager to learn the mysteries of motorcars — paid $100 a year to huddle in the windowless, smelly, rodent-friendly Huntington Avenue Y. Now, with its annual tuition alone nudging $30,000 and other colleges offering the real-life employment experience that NU helped pioneer, it can no longer market itself as a no-frills, low-priced spread. No more "crack house" sublets, no more warehousing frosh in the still-seedy Y. Smaller classes and better students are a necessity. And so is a campus spiffier than the 1970s asphalt jungle that mystery writer Robert Parker, a former Northeastern English professor, dubbed the corporate headquarters for White Tower hamburgers.

Behind Huntington, Northeastern has bet that revitalizing the Roxbury neighborhood on its southern edge will buff its gritty image, meet its growing housing needs, and spark community renewal. Now those mean streets display infinite disparity. Sleek dorms abut padlocked liquor stores. Shuttered hair salons and decrepit pizza shacks lurk only yards from a parking garage and squash center.

Still, NU keeps on keeping on. With its caramel lattes, $4,440-per-semester "edge" housing, and natural fibers, it lunges for the next rung on the social ladder.

One tip for the ascent: give those alphabet buildings real names before students think of their own. The temptation for Building H'ers to honor an over-the-counter preparation may be too much to resist. ■

Bill Kirtz is an associate professor in the School of Journalism at Northeastern University.

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2005 ROTCH
TRAVELLING SCHOLARSHIP

The Architects' Temptations

By Nathalie Beauvais RIAC, MAPA

JURY:

Kim Ackert AIA
Kim Ackert Architects
New York City

John Fernandez AIA
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Steven Foote FAIA
Perry Dean Rogers | Partners
Boston

Brian Healy AIA
Brian Healy Architects
Boston

Michael LeBlanc
Utile, Inc.
Boston

Laura Miller
Harvard Graduate School of Design
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Peter Wiederspahn AIA
Northeastern University
Boston

First Prize (declined)
Zachary Hinchliffe, Assoc. AIA

Alternate ($35,000)
Ryan Yaden

This year's final Rotch competition focused on a proposed arts center and T station for Union Square in Somerville, Massachusetts — a mixed-use facility meant to create a symbolic gateway into the city. The site was complex, its odd triangular shape made even more confounding by the presence of train tracks at its southern edge, running 25 feet below street elevation.

The competition addressed two strategic urban planning issues: mass transportation and urban redevelopment through the arts. Behind the specifics of the competition program lurked a provocative question: How can urban issues influence architecture beyond the predictable formula of mixed-uses + arts + transportation + open-spaces = urbanity?

The second-place ("alternate") scheme, submitted by Ryan Yaden, framed the site with three rectilinear structures defining an urban plaza. Loft-like studios lined the site's perimeter, making the presence of artists obvious to passersby. The plaza ran the depth of the site and brought pedestrians from the street level to the subway.

The winning scheme by Zachary Hinchliffe gathered the project's functional elements within one singular form covering the entire site. The structure could read as a string of elegant origamis, where bends and notches shaped pathways and rooms along an interior street operating as the organizational thread among disparate elements. The project explored the texture and form of the various façade surfaces, a theme also presented in the winner's travel and research proposal. The jury was attracted to a design that compressed many issues in one compelling structure.

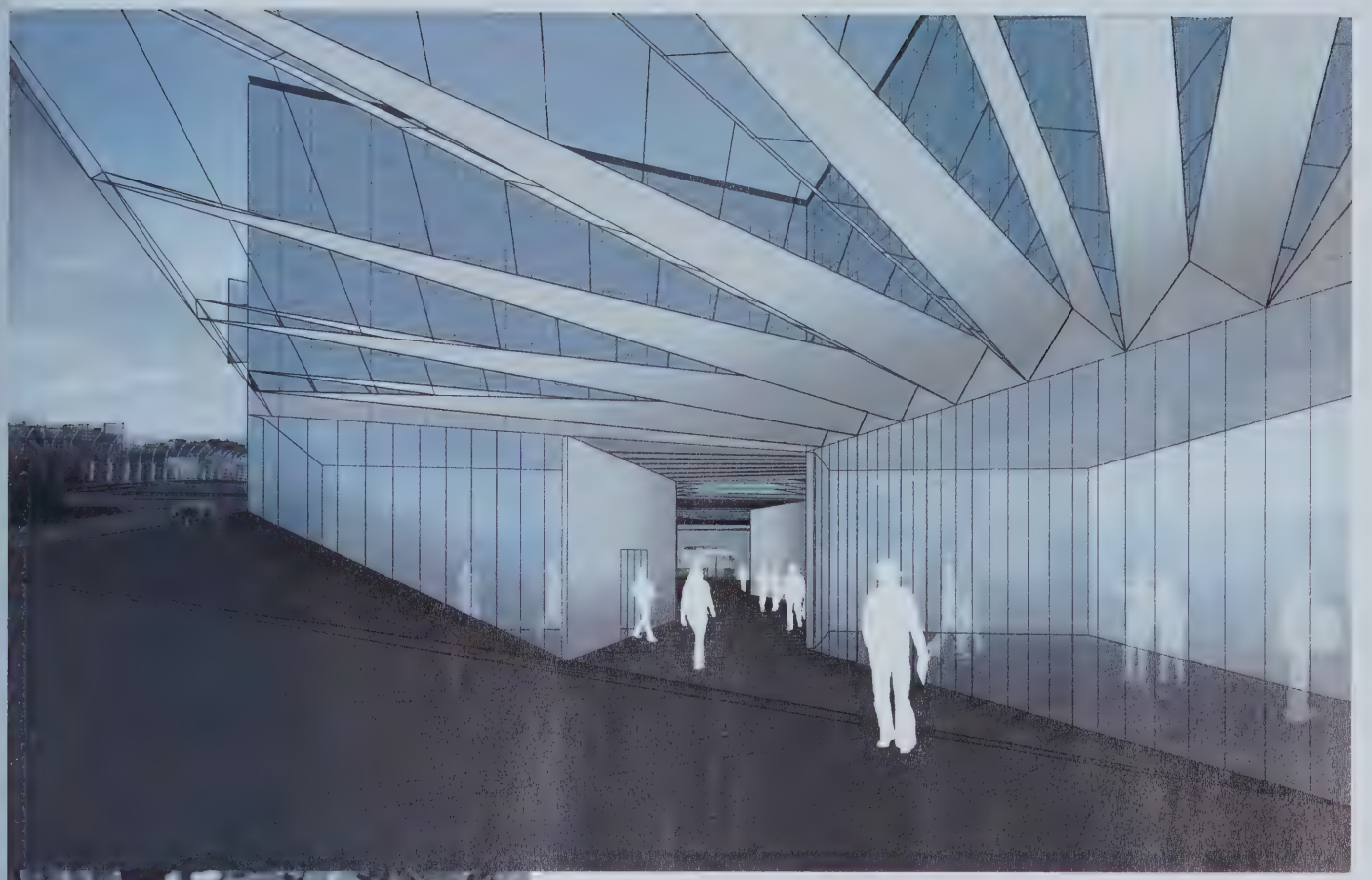
In many respects, the jury selected the kind of project that makes people critical of many urban architectural offerings: windowless street façades; a civic building occupying the entire site leaving only narrow sidewalks; and an under-scaled interior public space. The jury, however, was aware of the proposal's shortcomings as an urban project and decided to value the brilliance of the architectural object.

People, jobs, families, and events inhabit the city, and politics shape it. As James Corner noted recently in *Harvard Design Magazine*, "Contemporary urban projects demand a new kind of synthetic imagination — a new form of practice in which architecture, landscape, planning, ecology, engineering, social policy, and political process are both understood and coordinated as an interrelated field."

Architects share an aesthetic that is acquired through the mastering of geometry, physics, and graphics necessary to bring to term the architectural project. Unfortunately, this rational aesthetic and enjoyment of abstraction is missed by most of the intended users. It seems that pleasure, sensuousness, and playfulness have been lost in the process. Architecture is "studied" instead of "experienced." The Rotch Fellowship was created to send promising architects abroad to see and feel architecture. Architects should not contrive to hold to an aesthetic they control but instead allow themselves to be tempted by the sensuousness of the built environment. This might be what young Benjamin Rotch had in mind when he left puritan New England in 1847 for the old continent. Thanks to his heirs, this tradition of enlightenment can be upheld. ■

Nathalie Beauvais RIAC, MAPA, practices urban design at Harvard University for the Harvard Planning + Allston Initiative. The 2005 competition program was written by Peter Wiederspahn AIA.

The Rotch Travelling Scholarship was established in 1883 to advance architectural education through foreign study and travel. Rotch Scholars today are selected through an annual two-stage competition. For more information, go to www.rotchscholarship.org.



Above, left: Winning scheme by Zachary Hinchliffe, Assoc. AIA.

Right: "Alternate" scheme by Ryan Yaden.

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JURY:

Amy Anthony
Housing Investments
Boston

Joan Goody FAIA
Goody Clancy
Boston

Stephen Kliment FAIA
New York City

Roger K. Lewis FAIA
Washington, DC

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Editor's note: Information about the award and the full text of jury comments may be found at www.johnclancyaward.org.

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Boston
CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares
Boston

Adelaide Avenue Neighborhood Revitalization
Providence, Rhode Island
Durkee, Brown, Viveiros & Werenfels
Providence, Rhode Island

Friendship-Pine/ Providence-Tanner Block Revitalization
Providence, Rhode Island
Durkee, Brown, Viveiros & Werenfels
Providence, Rhode Island

Sanctuary Place
Chicago
Farr Associates
Chicago

Swan's Marketplace
Oakland, California
Pyatok Architects
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in association with
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HomeSafe
San Jose, California
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San Diego

Eucalyptus View
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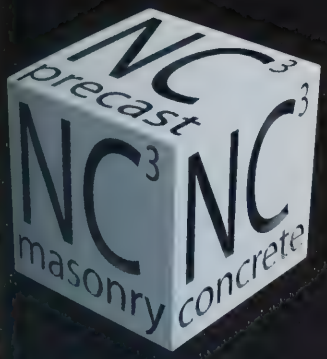

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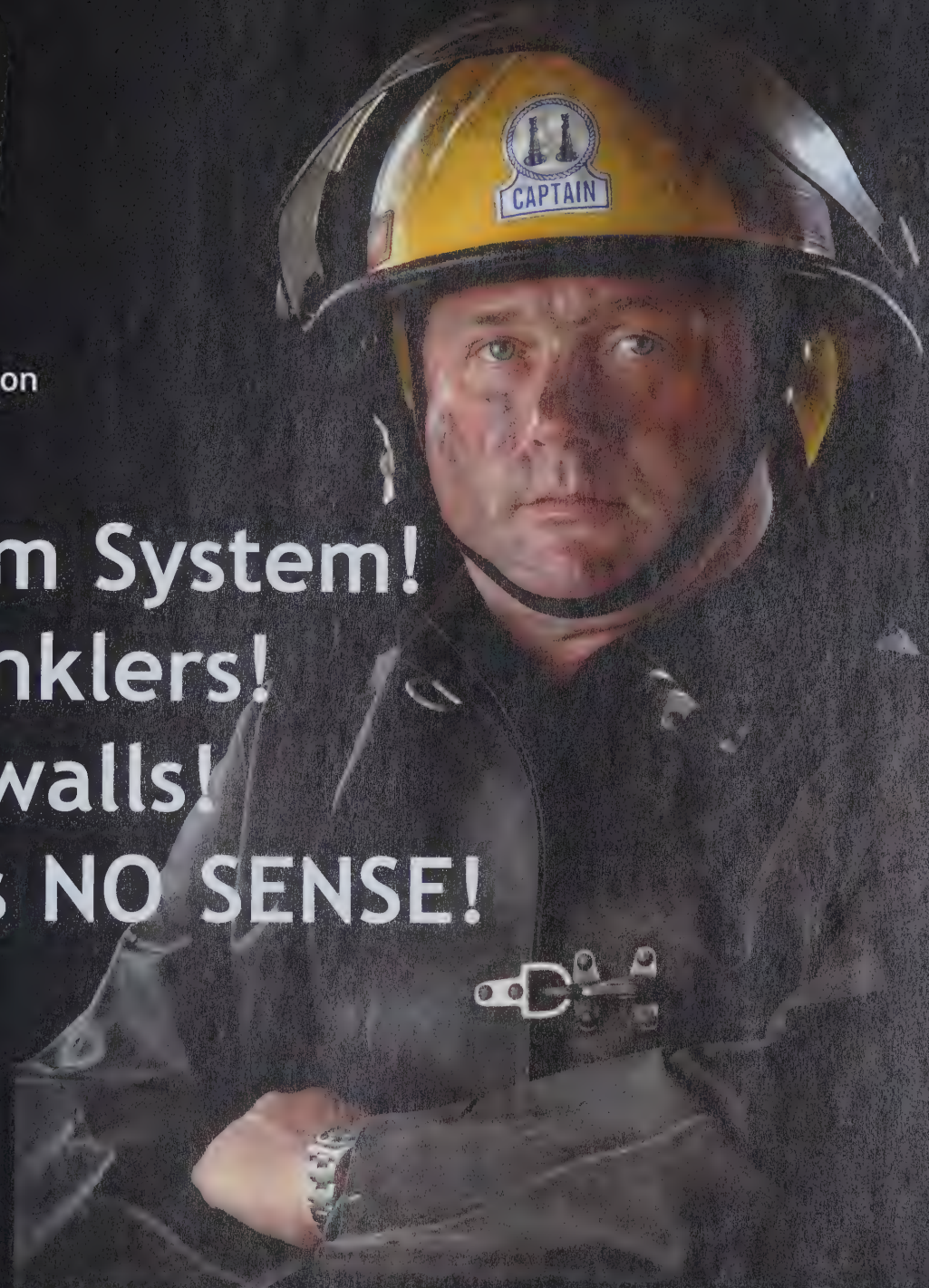

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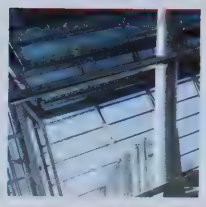


HONOR AWARDS

43 ARC/Architectural Resources Cambridge
C. Bernard Shea Rowing Center
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

44 Ann Beha Architects
Daniel Arts Center
Simon's Rock College of Bard
Great Barrington, Massachusetts

45 Ann Beha Architects
Skillman Library
Lafayette College
Easton, Pennsylvania

46 Einhorn Yaffee Prescott with Helfand Architecture
Unified Science Center
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

47 William Rawn Associates
The Music Center at Strathmore
North Bethesda, Maryland

48 Charles Rose Architects
Copper House
Belmont, Massachusetts

49 Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott
Elizabeth B. Hall Chapel
Concord Academy
Concord, Massachusetts

50 Elizabeth Whittaker, Assoc. AIA
Middlesex Lounge
Cambridge, Massachusetts

AWARDS

51 ARC/Architectural Resources Cambridge
New Research Building
Harvard Medical School
Boston

51 Andrew Cohen Architects
Springstep: A Center for Traditional and Contemporary Arts
Medford, Massachusetts

52 Goody Clancy
The Burton D. Morgan Center for Entrepreneurship
Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana

52 Gund Partnership
National Association of Realtors Headquarters
Washington, DC

JURY:

John Czarnecki, Assoc. AIA
John Wiley & Sons
Hoboken, New Jersey

Beth Dunlop
Miami Herald
Miami, Florida

Roxanne Sherbeck AIA
Bohlin Cywinski Jackson
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

Terry Steelman AIA
Ballinger
Philadelphia

Doug Steidl FAIA
Braun & Steidl Architects
Akron, Ohio
(national AIA president)

Editor's note: The full text of jury comments, including responses to individual projects and advice on preparing submissions, may be found at www.architects.org/awards.

JURY COMMENTS:

This year's body of work (141 projects) was dominated by public and private college and university dorms, labs, performing arts, and other facilities. We also had an opportunity to review a variety of industrial projects, loft conversions, single-family homes, and some public buildings. We were surprised that we did not receive many senior-living facilities, museums, churches, corporate facilities, or healthcare facilities.

Perhaps the most consistent critique we can offer about the body of work we reviewed was the frequent absence of a clear story. For example, we received some renovation/restoration projects in which it was difficult to tell what the existing facility was and what new work the submitting architect had done. Similarly, it was often difficult to make the connection between the narrative text and the claims made in that text on the images provided to illustrate those claims. Our advice is to avoid thinking about submissions to programs such as this as marketing presentations and, rather, to clearly articulate the design challenge and the design solution in a concise narrative directed to other design professionals.

We were struck throughout our review of these submissions with the high level of design skill and design competence with which this body of work was executed. Ultimately, we found ourselves drawn to eight projects that seemed remarkably well-conceived, carefully executed, usually marked by design restraint, clearly responsive to the program, and reflecting an unusual level of thoughtfulness and frequently innovation. In addition, we have identified 15 other projects of significant merit.

AWARDS (continued)
53 Gund Partnership
The Ensworth School
Nashville, Tennessee

53 Kling
Merck Research Laboratories
Boston

54 Leers Weinzapfel Associates
University Pavilion
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati

54 Moskow Architects
MV II
Chilmark, Massachusetts

55 Moskow Architects
Arbor House
Chilmark, Massachusetts

55 Charles Rose Architects
Orleans House
Orleans, Massachusetts

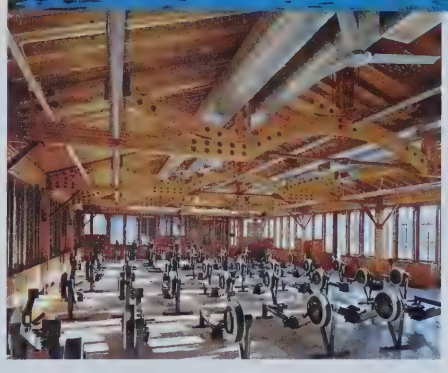
56 Charles Rose Architects
Gloucester House
Gloucester, Massachusetts

56 Schwartz/Silver Architects with Eskew + Dumez + Ripple
Shaw Center for the Arts
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

57 Tappé Associates
The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum
Ridgefield, Connecticut

57 William Rawn Associates
'62 Center for Theatre and Dance
Williams College
Williamstown, Massachusetts

58 William Rawn Associates
Wieland and King Residence Halls
Amherst College
Amherst, Massachusetts



HONOR AWARD
C. Bernard Shea Rowing Center Renovation and Addition
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

Architect:
ARC/Architectural Resources Cambridge
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.arcusa.com

Project team:
Henry S. Reeder FAIA (principal-in-charge); Robert N. Zverina AIA (project designer); Jeffrey D. Peterson AIA (project architect); Susie Festel (interior designer)

Contractor:
Patock Construction

Consultants:
John Born and Associates (structural); R.G. Vanderweil Engineers (mechanical/electrical/plumbing/fire protection); Van Note-Harvey Associates (civil); Carol R. Johnson Associates (landscape); McPhail Associates (geotechnical)

Photographer:
Nick Wheeler

Building upon Princeton's 135-year rowing tradition, the Shea Rowing Center improves and expands the original Class of 1887 Boathouse into a world-class crew facility. Inspired by the existing building's rooflines and massing, the 13,500-square-foot addition includes a 16-person rowing tank and workout spaces to attract both coaches and athletes.

HONOR AWARD
Daniel Arts Center
Simon's Rock College of Bard
Great Barrington, Massachusetts

Architect:
Ann Beha Architects
Boston
www.annbeha.com

Project team:
Robert Miklos FAIA (principal); Ann Beha FAIA (principal); Geoffrey Pingree AIA (project manager); Zachary Hinchliffe, Assoc. AIA (project architect); Tom Kahmann; Patrick Tam; Mark Oldham

Construction manager:
Mullaney Corporation

Consultants:
Fischer Dachs Associates (theatre); Acentech (acoustics); Reed Hilderbrand Associates (landscape); LeMessurier Consultants (structural); TMP Consulting Engineering (mechanical/electrical/plumbing/fire protection); White Engineers (civil); OccuHealth Inc. (occupational health and safety)

Photographer:
Peter Vanderwarker

This new 50,000-square-foot performing/visual arts center includes two theatres as well as rehearsal space, dance studio, offices, classrooms, visual arts studios, and various other support spaces. The architecture responds to the site's agrarian setting and to the school's ambitions for teaching and performance.

HONOR AWARD

Skillman Library
Lafayette College
Easton, Pennsylvania

Architect:
Ann Beha Architects
Boston
www.annbeha.com

Project team:
Robert Miklos FAIA (design principal); Jonathan Cutler AIA (project manager); Whitney Hudson (project designer); Andrew Wang AIA (project architect); Scott Slarsky; Jason Cooper, Assoc. AIA; Tom Kahmann

Programming and preliminary design:
Schwartz/Silver Architects: Robert Miklos FAIA (principal); Angela Ward Hyatt AIA (project architect); Randolph Meiklejohn AIA (project manager)

Contractor:
Turner Construction Company

Consultants:
Cavanaugh Tocci Associates (acoustics); Richard Burck Associates (landscape); LeMessurier Consultants (structural); Snyder Hoffman Associates (mechanical/electrical/plumbing/fire protection); Cherry Webber and Associates (civil)

Photographers:
Florian Holzherr (top and left); Steven Wolfe

The original 1963 library has been expanded and redesigned as a vibrant center of social and intellectual life at Lafayette. The 35,000-square-foot addition creates an innovative model for information services. The library integrates information technology and expands collections and library programs.

HONOR AWARD
Unified Science Center
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

Architects:
Einhorn Yaffee Prescott
Boston
www.eypae.com

Helfand Architecture
New York City
www.helfandarch.com

Project team:
Einhorn Yaffee Prescott: Cahal Stephens AIA, FRIAI (principal-in-charge); Kip Ellis (project manager); Lila Khalvati AIA (project architect); Yelena Lembersky AIA; Nikolas Dando Haenisch AIA; Jay Hallinan AIA; Mary Killough IIDA; Michele Webb; Ralph Gifford PE; Andy Hebert PE; Kieran Guinan; Jim Boyle

Helfand Architecture: Margaret Helfand FAIA (design principal); John Tinmouth, Jennifer Tulley Stevenson (project architects); Tom Chang; Elisa Testa

Construction manager:
Skanska Mid-Atlantic

Consultants:
R.W. Sullivan (plumbing/fire protection); Christakis VanOcker Morrison (structural); Gladnick Wright Salmeda (civil); M.L. Baird & Co. (landscape); NASCO Construction Services (cost estimating); Cavanaugh Tocci Associates (acoustics); FutureSys Design (audio-visual); Renfro Design Group (lighting)

Photographer:
Jeff Goldberg/Esto

The Swarthmore campus is enhanced by this 68,000-square-foot renovation and 80,000-square-foot addition that creates an improved environment for the study of the sciences. This facility contains teaching and research laboratories, classrooms, and informal interaction spaces. The building is LEED-certified and celebrates Swarthmore's commitment to the environment and its arboretum.

HONOR AWARD

The Music Center at Strathmore
North Bethesda, Maryland

Client:
Montgomery County, Maryland

Architect:
William Rawn Associates
Boston
www.rawnarch.com

Project team:
William L. Rawn III FAIA, Alan Joslin AIA (principals for design); Clifford V. Gayley AIA (associate principal for design); Jeanne Kuespert AIA (project manager); Philip Gray (project architect); Gary Gwon; David Bagnoli; Victor Liu; Euiseok Jeong AIA; Bruce Danzer AIA

Associate architect:
Grimm and Parker Architects

Contractor:
Tishman Construction Corporation

Consultants:
LeMessurier Engineers (structural); TMP Engineering (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); A. Morton Thomas and Associates (civil); Kirkegaard Associates (acoustics); Theatre Projects Consultants (theatre); Louise Schiller Associates (landscape); Fisher Marantz Stone (lighting)

Photographers:
Alan Karchmer (top and left);
Ron Solomon

The Music Center at Strathmore, a 1,976-seat concert hall, is the second year-round home of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. The center also features a 30,000-square-foot education wing with four rehearsal rooms, nine practice rooms, and other teaching facilities.

HONOR AWARD
Copper House
Belmont, Massachusetts

Client:
Withheld at owner's request

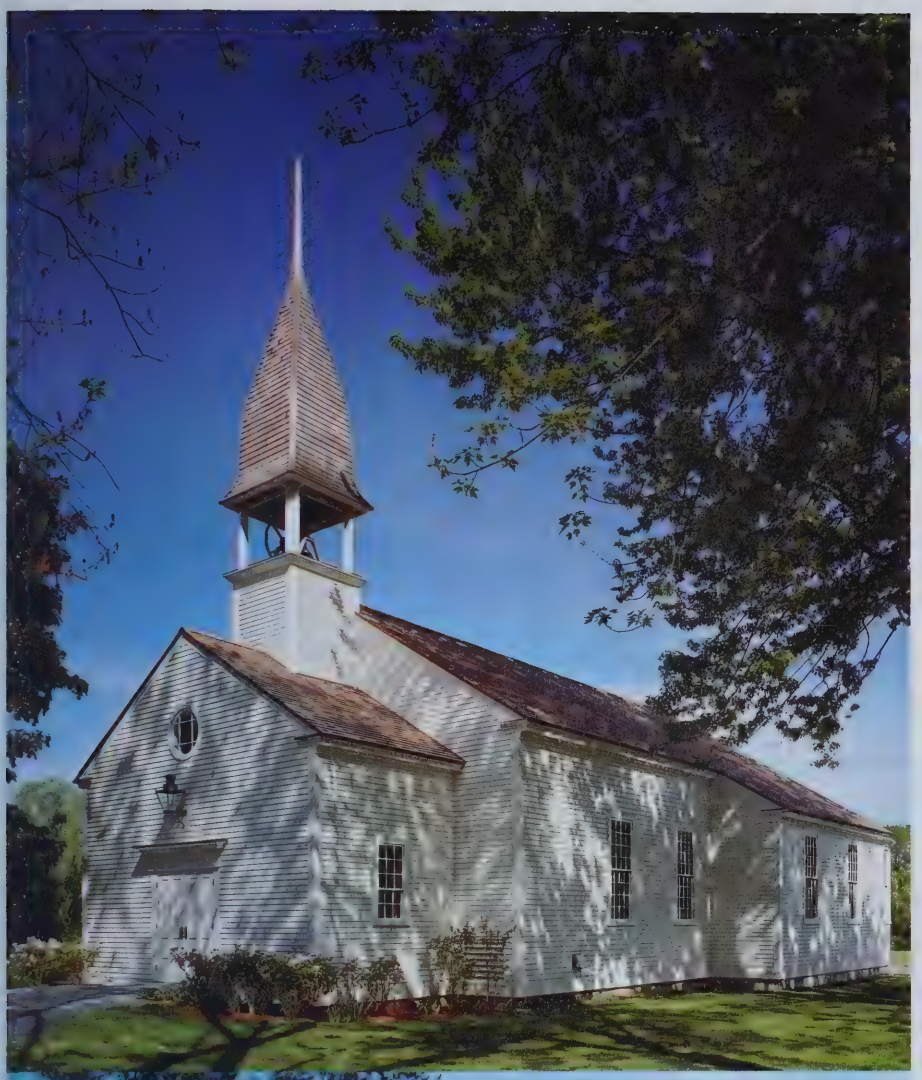
Architect:
Charles Rose Architects
Somerville, Massachusetts
www.charlesrosearchitects.com

Contractor:
E.A.Colangeli Construction

Consultants:
Richmond So Engineers (structural)

Photographer:
John Edward Linden

The design challenge of this project was to add a 3,000-square-foot residential addition to an existing vinyl-clad, 1940s kit home. The solution was a warm, minimalist yet sculptural architecture that integrates the old and the new. The original structure is intact but hidden behind a cedar rain screen.



HONOR AWARD

Elizabeth B. Hall Chapel
Rehabilitation and Restoration
Concord Academy
Concord, Massachusetts

Architect:
Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott
Boston
www.sbra.com

Project team:
Malcolm P. Kent AIA; Thomas D. Kearns AIA; William G. Barry, Jr. AIA

Construction manager:
C.E. Floyd Company

Consultants:
Foley & Buhl Engineering (structural); AHA Consulting Engineers (electrical); Judith Nitsch Engineering (civil); Lam Partners (lighting); Architectural Interior Products (woodwork); Walker-Kluesing Design Group (landscape); Colonial Barn (heavy timber framing); Metro Swift Sprinkler (sprinkler system)

Photographer:
Anton Grassl

The result is simple and elegant — a New England meeting house continuing in service as the heart of Concord Academy's campus. The serenity of its completed form belies the many complexities of design, craft, and schedule that were successfully dealt with by the owner, architect, and builder.

HONOR AWARD
Middlesex Lounge
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Client:
Science Partners

Designer:
Elizabeth Whittaker, Assoc. AIA
Boston
www.elizabethwhittaker.com

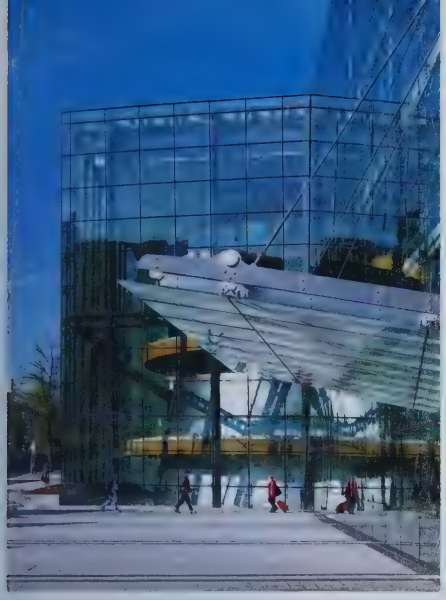
Project team:
Elizabeth Whittaker, Assoc. AIA (principal); Paul Voulgaris; Andrew Wenrick

Contractor:
Quest Contractors

Consultants:
Bill Bancroft (woodwork); Erica Moody (steelwork)

Photographer:
Chuck Choi

The design of this lounge was inspired by the client's "finger food"-only menu. The intent was to exploit this sense of tactility by juxtaposing raw natural materials with diverse textures (felt, steel, concrete, and wood). Two-seater benches on casters combined with small coffee tables encourage a constant re-interpretation of layout.



AWARD

New Research Building
Harvard Medical School
Boston

Architect:
ARC/Architectural Resources Cambridge
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.arcusa.com

Project team:
Arthur Cohen AIA (principal-in-charge); Robert H. Quigley AIA (project manager); Been Zen Wang AIA (design principal); Jeffreys M. Johnson AIA (project architect)

Contractor:
William A. Berry & Son

Consultants:
LeMessurier Consultants (structural); BR+A Consulting Engineers (mechanical/electrical/plumbing/fire protection); Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (civil); Pressley Associates (landscape); McPhail Associates (geotechnical)

Photographers:
Jeff Goldberg/Esto (left); Warren Patterson

The largest expansion of the Harvard Medical School campus since its founding, the New Research Building features clustered flexible open labs, two-story "sky lobbies," and conferencing facilities that encourage interaction between basic scientific and clinical research teams, accelerating the flow of information from bench to bedside.

AWARD

Springstep: A Center for Traditional and Contemporary Arts
Medford, Massachusetts

Client:
Springstep Center for Traditional and Contemporary Arts

Architect:
Andrew Cohen Architects
Wayland, Massachusetts
www.andrewcohenarchitects.com

Project team:
Andrew Cohen AIA (project principal); Thomas White AIA (project architect); Todd Cirillo AIA; Maresa Buja

Contractor:
Payton Construction Corporation

Consultants:
Sarkis Zerounian & Associates (structural); Architectural Engineers (mechanical/electrical/plumbing/fire protection); Charles H. Gross PE (geotechnical); Cavanaugh Tocci Associates (acoustics); Kalin Associates (specifications)

Photographer:
Greg Premru

Springstep, a community-based arts center, is a vital component of contemporary culture. The building contains three dance/performance spaces and a multi-story space facing Medford City Hall. This space functions as a lantern in the evening, simultaneously illuminating the exterior and revealing the performances and social gatherings within.

AWARD
The Burton D. Morgan Center for Entrepreneurship
Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana

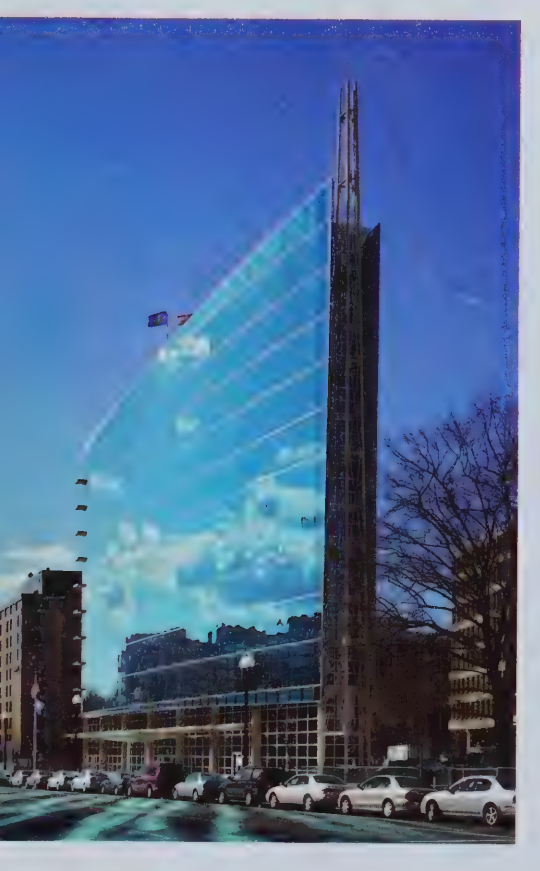
Architect:
Goody Clancy
Boston
www.goodyclancy.com

Contractor:
Kettlehut Construction

Consultants:
Souza, True and Partners (structural); Shooshanian Engineering (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); Falk Associates (specifications); Vorndran & Associates (food service); Lam Partners (lighting); Acentech (audio-visual/acoustics); IR Security & Safety (hardware)

Photographer:
Anton Grassl

A symbolic gateway to Discovery Park, the 30,000-square-foot Morgan Center nurtures the entrepreneurial spirit of Purdue and encourages collaboration and exchange across many disciplines. Conference areas, meeting spaces, a café, and small-scale common spaces shaped to encourage spontaneous, informal meetings, complement a 72-seat lecture room and three research labs.



AWARD
National Association of Realtors Headquarters
Washington, DC

Client:
National Association of Realtors

Design architect:
Gund Partnership
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.gundpartnership.com

Project team:
Graham Gund FAIA; Eric Svahn AIA; Meng Howe Lim AIA; Matt Formicola, Assoc. AIA; Tom Maloney; Yun Lee; Michael Blutt

Architect of record:
SMB Architects

Owner's representative:
Johnson Johnson Crabtree Architects

Construction manager:
CarrAmerica Development

Developer:
Lawrence N. Brandt

Consultants:
Fernandez & Associates (structural); E.K. Fox & Associates (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); Vanderweil Engineers (design engineer); CAS Engineering (civil/survey); Oehme van Sweden & Associates (landscape); Natural Logic (LEED); George Sexton Associates (lighting); Designsmith (graphics)

Photographer:
Alan Karchmer

This former brownfield site is the first new construction in the nation's capital to achieve silver LEED certification. An unusual triangular site just three blocks from the US Capitol and the client's mission drove the sustainable solution. The curved high-performance coated glass reflects changing conditions of sun and clouds, summer and winter.

AWARD
New Campus Development
The Ensworth School
Nashville, Tennessee

Architect:
Gund Partnership
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.gundpartnership.com

Associate architect:
Hastings Architecture Associates

Project team:
Graham Gund FAIA; John Prokos AIA; Christine Verbitzki; Robert Carlos Ridruejo; Luca Ricco; Joong Kim; David Tabenken AIA; Laura Carthy; Elizabeth Roettger; Ana Gordan AIA; Khalil Pirani; Michael Dembowski AIA

Construction manager:
D.F. Chase

Consultants:
Littlejohn Engineering Associates (civil); EMC Structural Engineers (structural); Hawkins Partners (landscape); Blanchard Group (programming); Wanda Palus Interiors (interior designer); Lee Company (mechanical/plumbing design and construction); Pan American Electric (electrical design and construction); Inman Food Services Group (food service); PSI (geotechnical); Cavanaugh Tocci Associates (acoustics); Douglas Group (graphics); Ripman Lighting Consultants (lighting)

Photographer:
Jeff Goldberg/Esto

A contemporary expression melds a Southern vernacular of porches, columns, and colonnades with traditional collegiate architecture to give this new campus a sense of permanence and community. Academics, arts, and athletics are organized around an open-sided courtyard. The balance of formal/informal spaces and the boundaries between inside/outside are intentionally porous.

AWARD
Merck Research Laboratories
Boston

Client:
Merck & Co.

Architect:
Kling
Philadelphia
www.kling.us

Project team:
Bradford White Fiske AIA (architectural design principal); Robert T. Hsu AIA (project director); Stephen Mullen AIA (project manager); Joseph Tinari AIA (senior project architect); Alberto Cavallero AIA, Sue Hu AIA (design architects); Paul Marchese AIA, Anthony Golebiewski (project architects); Douglas Henderson PE (structural engineer); Henry Pinto PE (HVAC engineer); Jack Donahue PE (plumbing/piping engineer); Steve Drobish PE (electrical engineer); Alberto Rios PE (instrumentation/controls engineer); Blair Monagle (fire safety engineer); Robert Maloney RLA (landscape architect); John Kostyo PE (civil engineer); Todd Lambert PE (fire protection/alarm engineer); Paul Leonard PE (engineering design principal); Richard Mark (interior senior designer)

Contractor:
Bovis Lend Lease

Consultants:
Israel Berger & Associates (curtainwall); Haley & Aldrich (geotechnical); Shen Milson & Wilke (acoustics); Environmental Specialties (environmental)

Photographers:
Paul Warchol; Christopher Barnes (right)

Merck Research Laboratories Boston is a 614,000-square-foot, 12-story high-tech research and laboratory building located in the Longwood Medical Area. Clad entirely in glass, the building includes chemistry, biology, and pharmacology laboratories; laboratory support spaces; office, conferencing, and interaction areas; a cafeteria; an auditorium; and a library.

AWARD
University Pavilion
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati

Architect:
Leers Weinzapfel Associates
Boston
www.lwa-architects.com

Associate architect:
GBBN Architects

Project team:
Leers Weinzapfel: Andrea P. Leers FAIA (co-principal-in-charge); Jane Weinzapfel FAIA (co-principal-in-charge); Joe Pryse AIA (project manager); Alex Adkins AIA (project architect); Ellen Altman AIA; Tom Chung AIA; Randy Whinery; Mee Lee; Michael Bardin; Sam Choi; Ezekial Brown; Gitte Knupsen; John Kim; Dan Lamp; Ralph Plemel

GBBN: Robert Gramann (principal-in-charge); Joseph Schwab (project manager); Thomas Gormley (project architect)

Contractor:
Correll Group
Turner Construction

Consultants:
Fosdick and Hilmer (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); THP Limited (structural); Balke Engineers (civil); Cronenberg & Co. (cost); Bentley-Koepke (landscape); AMAZE Design (exhibit)

Photographers:
Alan Karchmer/Esto (top);
Peter Aaron/Esto

The University Pavilion brings together admissions, enrollment, financial aid, registrar, bursar, career development, educational services, disability services, and a new campus visitor center in an innovative facility at the heart of the campus' McMicken Commons.

AWARD
MV II
Chilmark, Massachusetts

Client:
Wade's Cove Associates

Architect:
Moskow Architects
Boston
www.moskowarchitects.com

Project team:
Keith Moskow AIA; Robert Linn

Builders:
McGrath Carpentry Service
Tiasquam Enterprises

The house is composed of three elements: an arcade; a structure for sleeping; and a structure for living. The linear building components frame an outdoor court and align with a view corridor cut through the wilderness. All wood is exposed and left in its natural state.

AWARD
Arbor House
Chilmark, Massachusetts

Client:
Quenames Partnership

Architect:
Moskow Architects
Boston
www.moskowarchitects.com

Project team:
Keith Moskow AIA; Robert Linn

Builder:
McGrath Carpentry Service

Photographer:
Greg Premru

The 800-square-foot house includes a grape arbor that collects the living areas like a seine net, extending outward to create a courtyard. The year-round house is engineered to be entirely passive solar for heating and cooling.

AWARD
Orleans House
Orleans, Massachusetts

Client:
Withheld at owner's request

Architect:
Charles Rose Architects
Somerville, Massachusetts
www.charlesrosearchitects.com

Contractor:
Homes by Sisson

Consultants:
Arup (structural); Stephen Stimson Associates (landscape); Coastal Engineering Company (civil); Haynes-Roberts (interior designer); Cape Cod Fabrications (steel fabrications)

Photographer:
John Edward Linden

The client expressed interest in a design that would take in the site's expansive water views and natural light, but would also provide shelter and comfort in the cold months. The project features a main house, an art studio and guest apartment, and a detached office tower.

AWARD
Gloucester House
Gloucester, Massachusetts

Client:
Withheld at owner's request

Architect:
Charles Rose Architects
Somerville, Massachusetts
www.charlesrosearchitects.com

Contractor:
Thoughtforms Corporation

Consultants:
Richmond So Engineers (structural); Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (landscape); Saffron House (interior designer); Sun Engineering (HVAC); Cavanaugh Tocci Associates (acoustics); Reflex Lighting Group (lighting); Spearit Sound (audio-visual)

Photographer:
John Edward Linden

The house is sited in close proximity to the water, and hovers over it, resulting in an experience of the ocean, which is not unlike that of being on the deck of a large boat. The sculptural forms respond to the craggy rock formations along the Gloucester coastline.

AWARD
Shaw Center for the Arts
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Client:
Shaw Center for the Arts

Design architect:
Schwartz/Silver Architects
Boston
www.schwartzsilver.com

Project team:
Warren R. Schwartz FAIA (design principal); Christopher B. Ingersoll AIA (principal-in-charge); Philip Chen AIA (project architect); Richard Lee, Peter Kleiner AIA

Executive architect:
Eskew + Dumez + Ripple

Associate architect:
Jerry M. Campbell Associates

Contractor:
The Lemoine Company

Consultants:
McKee & Deville (structural); M&E Consulting (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); Hargreaves Associates (landscape); Brandston Partnership (lighting); Acentech (acoustics); Theatre Projects Consultants (theatre)

Photographer:
The Arkansas Office, Inc./Timothy Hursley

The Shaw Center in Baton Rouge combines the LSU Museum of Art and studio art facilities, the Manship Theatres and rehearsal halls, private and LSU student galleries, restaurants and shops, all within a new glass-clad building and a renovated historic structure. It was a cooperative endeavor of Louisiana State University, city, state, and private funding.

AWARD

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum
Ridgefield, Connecticut

Client:
The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

Architect:
Tappé Associates
Boston
www.tappe.com

Project team:
Charles M. Hay AIA (principal-in-charge, design principal); Meliti D. Dikeos (design associate); Jeffrey Brussel; Christopher Kiley; Matthew J. Leak; John D. Selle

Contractor:
FIP Construction

Consultants:
Alteri Sebor Wieber (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); LeMessurier Consultants (structural); Richard Burck Associates (landscape)

Photographer:
Peter Aaron/Esto

The Aldrich has gained a national reputation for exhibiting contemporary art and for its acclaimed art education programs. The museum is in a historic district and the design responds to the scale and character of its residential context while still expressing the mission of the museum.

AWARD

'62 Center for Theatre and Dance
Williams College
Williamstown, Massachusetts

Architect:
William Rawn Associates
Boston
www.rawnarch.com

Project team:
William L. Rawn III FAIA, Alan Joslin AIA (principals for design); David Croteau (project architect); Randy Wilmot AIA (project manager); Rupinder Singh AIA; Andrew Jonic; Yu-Lin Chen; Ken Amano; Chris Dobosz; Bruce Danzer AIA

Contractor:
Barr and Barr

Consultants:
LeMessurier Consultants (structural); TMP Engineering (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); The Halvorson Company (landscape); Horton Lees Brogden (lighting); Acoustic Dimensions (acoustics); Theatre Projects Consultants (theatre)

Photographer:
Robert Benson

The '62 Center for Theatre and Dance includes four major venues: the 550-seat MainStage Theatre; the 200-seat Center-Stage Theatre (studio theatre); the 210-seat Adams Memorial Theatre (thrust stage); and a dance studio. The center supports the college's theatre and dance programs during the academic year, and houses the Williamstown Theatre Festival in the summer.

AWARD

Wieland and King Residence Halls
Amherst College
Amherst, Massachusetts

Architect:
William Rawn Associates
Boston
www.rawnarch.com

Project team:
William Rawn, III FAIA (principal for design); Clifford V. Gayley AIA (associate principal for design); Randy Wilmot AIA (project manager); Nico Larco; Euiseok Jeong AIA; Paul Governor

Contractor:
Barr and Barr

Consultants:
LeMessurier Consultants (structural); BVH Integrated Services (mechanical/electrical/plumbing/civil); Ripman Lighting Consultants (lighting); Carol R. Johnson Associates (landscape)

Photographer:
Robert Benson

Two new residence halls (115 beds) overlooking adjacent athletic fields create a strong southeastern corner to the East Campus. Strong, simple forms recall the elemental character of campus buildings. A shallow curve gives the buildings' edge a dynamic quality and opens the East Campus to the greater landscape.

GPI models
www.gpimodels.com

www.obrienandsons.com

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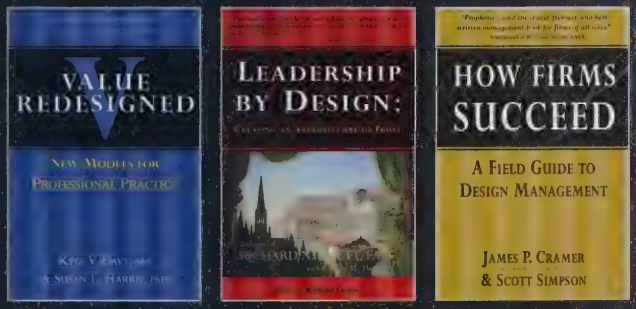

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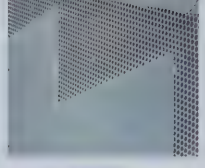
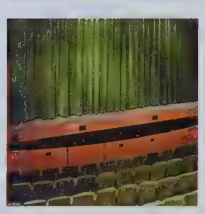
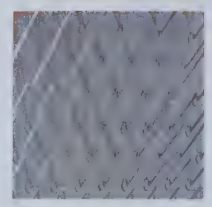


HIGHER EDUCATION DESIGN AWARDS





HONOR AWARDS

61 Ann Beha Architects
Skillman Library
Lafayette College
Easton, Pennsylvania

62 Elkus/Manfredi Architects
Tufte Performance
and Production Center
Emerson College
Boston

AWARDS

63 Einhorn Yaffee Prescott
Harry Elkins Widener
Memorial Library
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

63 William Rawn Associates
'62 Center for Theatre
and Dance
Williams College
Williamstown,
Massachusetts

CITATIONS

64 Ann Beha Architects
Daniel Arts Center
Simon's Rock College
of Bard
Great Barrington,
Massachusetts

64 Einhorn Yaffee Prescott with Helfand Architecture
Unified Science Center
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

65 Goody Clancy
Dreyfus Chemistry
Laboratories
Massachusetts Institute
of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts

65 William Rawn Associates
College of Computer and
Information Science and
Residence Hall
Northeastern University
Boston

66 Schwartz/Silver Architects with Eskew + Dumez + Ripple
Shaw Center for the Arts
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

JURY:

Louanne Greene AIA
Ayers Saint Gross
Baltimore

Kevin Hom AIA
Kevin Hom + Andrew Goldman
Architects
New York City

Peter Newman AIA
Herbert S. Newman and
Partners
New Haven, Connecticut

Terrance Neylon
New England College of
Optometry
Boston

Editor's note: The full text of jury comments, including responses to individual projects and advice on preparing submissions, may be found at www.architects.org/awards.

JURY COMMENTS:

In general, the 65 projects we examined reflected a high level of design competence. However, we perceived a pervasive homogeneity of design that often seemed risk-averse, the result, perhaps, of the dominance of large firms in this field that in effect create prototypes mimicked by others in the profession. The innovation we did discover was largely in projects completed for small colleges. It was also interesting to note that siting and planning in almost every case seemed just right but often seemed to be incompletely manifested in the final project. Ultimately, we found ourselves drawn to those projects that seemed well conceived, carefully executed, usually marked by design restraint, and clearly responsive to the program.

HONOR AWARD
Skillman Library
Lafayette College
Easton, Pennsylvania

Architect:
Ann Beha Architects
Boston
www.annbeha.com

Project team:
Robert Miklos FAIA (design principal); Jonathan Cutler AIA (project manager); Whitney Hudson (project designer); Andrew Wang AIA (project architect); Scott Slarsky; Jason Cooper, Assoc. AIA; Tom Kahmann

Programming and preliminary design:
Schwartz/Silver Architects: Robert Miklos FAIA (principal); Angela Ward Hyatt AIA (project architect); Randolph Meiklejohn AIA (project manager)

Contractor:
Turner Construction Company

Consultants:
Cavanaugh Tocci Associates (acoustics); Richard Burck Associates (landscape); LeMessurier Consultants (structural); Snyder Hoffman Associates (mechanical/electrical/plumbing/fire protection); Cherry Webber and Associates (civil)

Photographers:
Florian Holzherr (top and left); Steven Wolfe

The original 1963 library has been expanded and redesigned as a vibrant center of social and intellectual life at Lafayette. The 35,000-square-foot addition creates an innovative model for information services. The library integrates information technology and expands collections and library programs.

HONOR AWARD
Tufte Performance and Production Center
Emerson College
Boston

Architect:
Elkus/Manfredi Architects
Boston
www.elkus-manfredi.com

Project team:
Howard F. Elkus FAIA, RIBA (principal-in-charge); Robert M. Koup AIA (project manager)

Contractor:
Lee Kennedy Company

Consultants:
LeMessurier Consultants (structural); Cosentini Associates (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); Auerbach Pollock Friedlander (theatre)

Photographer:
Peter Vanderwarker

The Tufte Performance and Production Center houses the core of Emerson College's live performance, broadcast, and video production facilities. The 11-story building on a tight, mid-block site links multiple campus buildings and creates a new identity for the college in Boston's Theatre District.

AWARD
Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Architect:
Einhorn Yaffee Prescott
Boston
www.eypae.com

Project team:
Cahal Stephens AIA, FRIAI (principal-in-charge); David Fixler AIA (preservation principal); Jonathan Balas AIA (project manager); Eric Ward AIA (project architect); Ralph Gifford PE (mechanical engineering principal); Bill Shosho PE (electrical engineering principal); Ana Gabby; Matthew Lewis AIA; Yelana Lembersky AIA; Tracey Welsh; Tyson Curcio AIA; Mary Killough IIDA; Antonio Yau IDSA; Jessica Modrey; Maureen Donato PE; Fletcher Clarcq; Marvin Segner PE; Joe Alves; Judwin Traub; George MacKenzie; Joseph Philbrick

Construction manager:
Lee Kennedy Company

Consultants:
FirePro (fire protection); Weidlinger Associates (structural); Daedalus Projects (cost estimating); Cavanaugh Tocci Associates (acoustics); Lam Partners (lighting)

Photographers:
Peter Vanderwarker; Bruce T. Martin; Peter Aaron/Esto (above)

The centerpiece of Harvard's library system, the 320,000-square-foot Widener Memorial Library houses approximately 3.5 million volumes. A comprehensive feasibility study led to the restoration of the public spaces, the addition of much-needed space, and the upgrading of all systems and the unique book stack structure.

AWARD
'62 Center for Theatre and Dance
Williams College
Williamstown, Massachusetts

Architect:
William Rawn Associates
Boston
www.rawnarch.com

Project team:
William L. Rawn III FAIA, Alan Joslin AIA (principals for design); David Croteau (project architect); Randy Wilmot AIA (project manager); Rupinder Singh AIA; Andrew Jonic; Yu-Lin Chen; Ken Amano; Chris Dobosz; Bruce Danzer AIA

Contractor:
Barr and Barr

Consultants:
LeMessurier Consultants (structural); TMP Engineering (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); The Halvorson Company (landscape); Horton Lees Brogden (lighting); Acoustic Dimensions (acoustics); Theatre Projects Consultants (theatre)

Photographer:
Robert Benson

The '62 Center for Theatre and Dance includes four major venues: the 550-seat MainStage Theatre; the 200-seat CenterStage Theatre (studio theatre); the 210-seat Adams Memorial Theatre (thrust stage); and a dance studio. The center supports the college's theatre and dance programs during the academic year, and houses the Williamstown Theatre Festival in the summer.

CITATION
Unified Science Center
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

Architects:
Einhorn Yaffee Prescott
Boston
www.eypae.com

Helfand Architecture
New York City
www.helfandarch.com

Project team:
Einhorn Yaffee Prescott: Cahal Stephens AIA, FRIAI (principal-in-charge); Kip Ellis (project manager); Lila Khalvati AIA (project architect); Yelena Lembersky AIA; Jay Hallinan AIA; Nikolas Dando Haenisch AIA; Mary Killough IIDA; Michele Webb; Ralph Gifford PE; Andy Hebert PE; Kieran Guinan; Jim Boyle

Helfand Architecture: Margaret Helfand FAIA (design principal); John Tinmouth, Jennifer Tulley Stevenson (project architects); Tom Chang; Elisa Testa

Construction manager:
Skanska Mid-Atlantic

Consultants:
R.W. Sullivan (plumbing/fire protection); Christakis VanOcker Morrison (structural); Gladnick Wright Salmeda (civil); M.L. Baird & Co. (landscape); NASCO Construction Services (cost estimating); Cavanaugh Tocci Associates (acoustics); FutureSys Design (audio-visual); Renfro Design Group (lighting)

Photographer:
Jeff Goldberg/Esto

The Swarthmore campus is enhanced by a 68,000-square-foot renovation and 80,000-square-foot addition that creates an improved environment for the study of the sciences. This facility contains teaching and research laboratories, classrooms, and informal interaction spaces. The building is LEED-certified and celebrates Swarthmore's commitment to the environment and its arboretum.

CITATION
Daniel Arts Center
Simon's Rock College of Bard
Great Barrington, Massachusetts

Architect:
Ann Beha Architects
Boston
www.annbeha.com

Project team:
Robert Miklos FAIA (principal); Ann Beha FAIA (principal); Geoffrey Pingree AIA (project manager); Zachary Hinchliffe, Assoc. AIA (project architect); Tom Kahmann; Patrick Tam; Mark Oldham

Construction manager:
Mullaney Corporation

Consultants:
Fischer Dachs Associates (theatre); Acentech (acoustics); Reed Hilderbrand Associates (landscape); LeMessurier Consultants (structural); TMP Consulting Engineering (mechanical/electrical/plumbing/fire protection); White Engineers (civil); OccuHealth Inc. (occupational health and safety)

Photographer:
Peter Vanderwarker

This new 50,000-square-foot performing/visual arts center includes two theatres as well as rehearsal space, dance studio, offices, classrooms, visual arts studios, and various other support spaces. The architecture responds to the site's agrarian setting, and the school's ambitions for teaching and performance.

CITATION
Dreyfus Chemistry Laboratories
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Architect:
Goody Clancy
Boston
www.goodyclancy.com

Contractor:
Linbeck/Kennedy & Rossi

Consultants:
Ocmulgee Associates (structural); Cosentini Associates (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); Harold R. Cutler PE (code); Falk Associates (specifications); Berg/Howland Associates (lighting); Cavanaugh Tocci Associates (audio-visual/acoustics); Rowan, William, Davies & Irwin (air-flow modeling); Construction Cost Systems (cost estimating)

Photographer:
Peter Vanderwarker

This remarkably complex project was initially driven by the need to replace the aging mechanical systems in this chemistry laboratory, designed by I.M. Pei in 1970. The comprehensive, multi-phase renovation, completed while the building was occupied, radically transformed the interior from a dark, cellular space to a bright, open, flexible research environment with state-of-the-art lab services.

CITATION
College of Computer and Information Science and Residence Hall
Northeastern University
Boston

Architect:
William Rawn Associates
Boston
www.rawnarch.com

Project team:
William L. Rawn III FAIA (principal for design); Clifford V. Gayley AIA (associate principal for design); Samuel M. Lasky AIA (project architect); Mark L. Warner AIA (project manager); Matthew Stymiest; Victor Liu; Euiseok Jeong AIA; David Grissino, Assoc. AIA; Keith Schwarting; Saipriya Rao; Bruce Danzer AIA

Contractor:
Turner Construction Company

Consultants:
LeMessurier Consultants (structural); Cosentini Associates (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); Haley & Aldrich (geotechnical); Ripman Lighting Consultants (lighting); Pressley Associates (landscape)

Photographer:
Alan Karchmer

Located across from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, this 18-story tower announces Northeastern University's presence along Huntington Avenue and on the city's skyline. This mixed-use building features the 66,000-square-foot College of Computer and Information Science on the first four floors and contains residential apartments on the floors above.

CITATION
Shaw Center for the Arts
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Design architect:
Schwartz/Silver Architects
Boston
www.schwartzsilver.com

Project team:
Warren R. Schwartz FAIA (design principal); Christopher B. Ingersoll AIA (principal-in-charge); Philip Chen AIA (project architect); Richard Lee; Peter Kleiner AIA

Executive architect:
Eskew + Dumez + Ripple

Associate architect:
Jerry M. Campbell Associates

Contractor:
The Lemoine Company

Consultants:
McKee & Deville (structural); M&E Consulting (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); Hargreaves Associates (landscape); Brandston Partnership (lighting); Acentech (acoustics); Theatre Projects Consultants (theatre)

Photographer:
The Arkansas Office, Inc./Timothy Hursley

The Shaw Center in Baton Rouge combines the LSU Museum of Art and studio art facilities, the Manship Theatres and rehearsal halls, private and LSU student galleries, restaurants and shops, all within a new glass-clad building and a renovated historic structure. It was a cooperative endeavor of Louisiana State University, city, state, and private funding.

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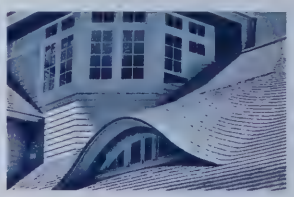

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K-12 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES DESIGN

HONOR AWARDS

69 Arrowstreet
Artists for Humanity EpiCenter
South Boston

70 Davis Brody Bond
Jackie Robinson School
New Haven, Connecticut

71 Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
Burr Elementary School
Fairfield, Connecticut

72 Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
Greenwich Academy
Greenwich, Connecticut

73 Tappé Associates
Malcolm S. White Elementary School
Woburn, Massachusetts

74 Weisz + Yoes
Bronx Charter School for the Arts
The Bronx, New York

CITATIONS

75 HMFH Architects
Visual and Performing Arts Center
Beaver Country Day School
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

75 HMFH Architects
Thompson Middle School
Newport, Rhode Island

76 Murphy Burnham & Buttrick Architects
School of the Holy Child Library and Classroom Addition
Rye, New York

76 Murphy Burnham & Buttrick Architects
St. Hilda's & St. Hugh's School Renovation
New York City

77 Newport Collaborative Architects
East Bay Community Action Program Early Learning Center
Newport, Rhode Island

JURY:

David Finney AIA
Design Partnership of Cambridge
Charlestown, Massachusetts

Beth Greenberg AIA
Dattner Architects
New York City

Michael Haverland AIA
Michael Haverland Architects
New York City

Jim LaPosta Jr. AIA
Jeter Cook + Jepson
Hartford, Connecticut

Michael Rosenfeld AIA
The Office of Michael Rosenfeld
West Acton, Massachusetts

JURY COMMENTS:

While we found a large percentage of the work submitted to be both interesting and competently designed, we were surprised to note how many submissions failed to provide adequate written and visual information on context. For example, many portfolios lacked the required site plans, north arrows, or other diagrams or related information that might have helped explain the logic that informed the design. In these cases, it was often difficult to determine if the design emerged from the site conditions or the program or was simply the result of arbitrary design decisions. Equally challenging was the frequent absence of written information on the client's educational philosophy or learning approach, which presumably helped shape the design of learning and meeting spaces.

With a roughly equal number of private and public facilities to examine, we noticed that clients and designers seemed to attend more closely to contextual or "campus" issues in the private school facilities. Attention to detail seemed more pronounced in private schools as well. Our belief is that we are all seeking a contemporary style for large public schools. That we are in the midst of this search for a style may also explain in part the frequent disconnect between words and images in many of the portfolios we received this year. It was often difficult to find in the visual images any manifestation of the assertions or claims made in the narrative.

In the end, we identified superior design as design that is authentic, elegantly crafted, often innovative, and is an honest, thoughtful response to the program, to the site, and to the needs of the users. We believe that the 11 projects we have chosen to honor this year respond to — and often go beyond — these criteria. We believe it is important to note that our profession's increasingly thoughtful attention to sustainable-design issues — obviously critical in school design as in all other projects — is reflected in most of the submissions that we examined; that is very encouraging.

Editor's note: This awards program is co-sponsored by the AIA New York Chapter. The full text of jury comments, including responses to individual projects and advice on preparing submissions, may be found at www.architects.org/awards.

HONOR AWARD
Artists for Humanity EpiCenter
South Boston

Client:
Artists for Humanity

Architect:
Arrowstreet
Somerville, Massachusetts
www.arrowstreet.com

Project team:
James Batchelor AIA; Patricia Cornelison AIA; Anthony Iacovino AIA

Contractor:
T.R. White Company

Consultants:
Building Science Engineering (sustainability); Rene Mugnier Associates (structural); Zade Company (mechanical/electrical); Nick Rodrigues (sculpture)

Photographer:
Richard Mandelkorn

The Artists for Humanity EpiCenter is home to an innovative art and entrepreneurship program serving at-risk urban high-school students. Sustainability, on a tight budget, was critical to the client's program. The design features unusual applications for inexpensive industrial materials, while keeping the volume and massing as simple as possible.

HONOR AWARD
Jackie Robinson School
New Haven, Connecticut

Client:
New Haven, Connecticut, Public Schools

Architect:
Davis Brody Bond
New York City
www.davisbrody.com

Project team:
Christopher K. Grabé AIA, J. Max Bond, Jr. FAIA (partners); Jennifer Marsh AIA (project architect); Sanjive Vaidya AIA; John Prospero; Peter Doncaster AIA; Mayine Yu AIA; Glenn O'Neil; Kyung Ahn; Renata Gomes AIA; Sae Won Oh; Karla Fernandes; Raphel Niogret; Bruce Dole

Construction managers:
C & R Development Co.; Konover

Consultants:
URS Corporation (mechanical/electrical/plumbing/structural/fire protection/telecommunications); Joseph Simeone Architect (code/specifications); Cardinal Engineering Assoc. (civil); Ameche Architects (landscape); Shen Milsom & Wilke (audio-visual/acoustics)

Photographer:
Elliott Kaufman

With an emphasis on natural light and outdoor vistas, the school is organized around a central courtyard and a three-story atrium, providing clarity of orientation and opportunity for student interaction. Nestling the building into the side of the site allowed a reclaimed park to be shared with the community.

HONOR AWARD
Burr Elementary School
Fairfield, Connecticut

Client:
Town of Fairfield, Connecticut

Architect:
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
New York City
www.som.com

Project team:
Roger Duffy (design partner); Anthony Vacchione (managing partner); Christopher McCready (project manager); Walter Smith (project architect); Scott Duncan (senior designer)

Construction manager:
Turner Construction Company

Consultants:
DiBlasi Associates (structural); Altieri Sebor Wieber (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); The Huntington Company (civil); Brown Sardina (landscape); Environmental Land Solutions (environmental); HRP Associates (survey); Leggette, Brashears & Graham (hydrology); Allan Davis Associates (traffic); Bruce J. Spiewak AIA (code); Food Service Facilities International (kitchen); Unadilla Laminated Products (wood laminating); Suntech of Connecticut (window glazing)

Photographers:
Aerial Photos NJ (top);
Robert Polidori (bottom)

The plan at the new Burr Elementary School features bean-shaped courtyards that preserve trees on the wooded site, bringing light, air, and intrigue into the learning experience.

HONOR AWARD

Greenwich Academy
Greenwich, Connecticut

Client:
Greenwich Academy

Architect:
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
New York City
www.som.com

Project team:
Roger Duffy (design partner); Walter Patrick Smith (associate partner); Scott Kirkham (senior designer); Marie-Christine Bellon Manzi; Nayyareen Chapra; Thibaut DeGryse; Jon-Mark Capps; Jennifer Gannon; Eric Richie; Joon-Sung Choi; Javier Haddad

Consultants:
Atkinson Koven Feinberg Engineers (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); DiBlasi Associates (structural); Redniss & Mead (civil); Haley & Aldrich (geotechnical); Brown Sardina (landscape); Fogarty Cohen Selby & Nemiroff (land-use attorney)

Photographers:
Florian Holzherr; Robert Polidori (top)

This new upper school merges with the landscape, making the most of surrounding views and daylight, creating a unified campus. The resultant academic village gives students the opportunity to learn, discover, and appreciate light, art, architecture, and their natural surroundings in new and comprehensive ways.

HONOR AWARD

Malcolm S. White Elementary School
Woburn, Massachusetts

Client:
City of Woburn, Massachusetts

Architect:
Tappé Associates
Boston
www.tappe.com

Project Team:
Brooke S. Trivas, Assoc. AIA (principal-in-charge)

Contractor:
Jackson Construction

Owner's representative:
Municipal Building Consultants

Consultants:
Garcia Galuska DeSousa (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); LeMessurier Consultants (structural); Geller/DeVellis (landscape/civil)

Photographer:
Greg Premru

The design of this new 67,000-square-foot elementary school was focused on the child. It caters to teachers and students, offering options for tailoring the learning experience. The plan blurs boundaries between traditional teaching spaces and paths of travel, and defines spaces using light, color, and materials, which energize, calm, and inspire.

HONOR AWARD

Bronx Charter School for the Arts
The Bronx, New York

Client:
Bronx Foundation for Education and the Arts

Architect:
Weisz + Yoes
New York City
www.wystudio.com

Project team:
Claire Weisz (principal-in-charge); Mark Yoes (project architect); Jasmit Rangr (project manager); David Fung

Contractor:
Kel-Mar Interiors

Client representative:
Civic Builders

Consultants:
Buro Happold Consulting Engineers (structural/mechanical); Jim Conti Lighting Design (lighting); Adam Lubinsky (community engagement)

Photographer:
Albert Vecerka/Esto

The architecture of this elementary school reflects its founding principle that arts education is critical to human development and learning. The restricted budget and previous factory use required a simple but innovative design approach toward a healthier learning environment; the community-driven process supported the design of a unique, light-filled space.

CITATION
Visual and Performing Arts Center
Beaver Country Day School
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

Client:
Beaver Country Day School

Architect:
HMFH Architects
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.hmfh.com

Project team:
George R. Metzger AIA (principal-in-charge); Mario J. Torroella AIA (design director); Pip Lewis AIA (project manager); Deborah Collins AIA (project architect); Arthur Duffy AIA

Construction manager:
Erland Construction Company

Consultants:
Foley & Buhl Engineering (structural); TMP Consulting Engineers (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); Carol R. Johnson Associates (landscape)

Photographer:
Wayne Soverns, Jr.

By integrating visual and performing arts in an innovative design, this new building reflects the school's commitment to a rapidly growing arts curriculum. To minimize its footprint on the small campus, the three-story building occupies a steep slope spanned by an entrance bridge that provides barrier-free access to all.

CITATION
Thompson Middle School
Newport, Rhode Island

Client:
Newport, Rhode Island, Public Schools

Architect:
HMFH Architects
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.hmfh.com

Project team:
Laura A. Wernick AIA (principal-in-charge); Mario J. Torroella AIA (design director); Maria Mulligan AIA (project architect); Andrew London AIA (job captain)

Contractor:
A.F. Lusi Construction

Consultants:
Foley & Buhl Engineering (structural); TMP Consulting Engineers (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); Carol R. Johnson Associates (landscape)

Photographer:
Wayne Soverns, Jr.

Honoring the client's desire to remain downtown where the school could better serve its students, the architect preserved and incorporated the oldest of the original four-building complex in a new 720-student middle school. With its front door and public spaces facing Broadway, Thompson remains a vital piece of Newport's downtown.

CITATION
School of the Holy Child Library and Classroom Addition
Rye, New York

Client:
School of the Holy Child

Architect:
Murphy Burnham & Buttrick Architects
New York City
www.mbbarch.com

Contractor:
The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company

Consultants:
Robert Silman Associates (structural); John Meyer Consulting (civil); Landmark Facilities Group (mechanical); Tillett Lighting Design (lighting)

Photographers:
Peter Aaron/Esto (bottom); Murphy, Burnham & Buttrick (top)

This project for School of the Holy Child, an all-girls Catholic middle and high school, comprises a 20,000-square-foot addition, which serves as the new entry, new library, and the heart of the institution. Additionally, the project includes new classrooms, administrative offices, and meeting spaces.

CITATION
St. Hilda's & St. Hugh's School Renovation
New York City

Client:
St. Hilda's & St. Hugh's School

Architect:
Murphy Burnham & Buttrick Architects
New York City
www.mbbarch.com

Contractor:
Home Interiors Inc.

Consultants:
Hage Engineering (structural); Landmark Facilities Group (mechanical); Melanie Freundlich Lighting Design (lighting)

Photographer:
Peter Aaron/Esto

This independent day school required a master plan and complete transformation to better serve its mission. The first phase entailed the creation of a new library, and subsequent phases have included the redesign of the entrance, music room, play-deck, locker areas, art rooms, and a rooftop addition.

CITATION

East Bay Community Action Program Early Learning Center
(formerly New Visions Head Start)
Newport, Rhode Island

Client:
Church Community Housing Corporation

Architect:
Newport Collaborative Architects
Newport, Rhode Island
www.ncarchitects.com

Project team:
Glenn R. Gardiner AIA (principal architect); Mike DeMatteo (project manager); Melissa Duby AIA

Contractor:
Pascack Building Company

Consultants:
R.K. Baker and Associates (mechanical); Odeh Engineers (structural); Fuss & O'Neill (civil); R.W. McClanaghan PE (electrical)

Photographer:
Aaron Usher III

This colorful and whimsical preschool building is constructed of corrugated metal and concrete block. The design is meant to create a stimulating environment for children using interesting shapes and colors in light-filled spaces. Playful "hop-scotch" floor patterns in the gym and corridors contribute to the sense of fun.

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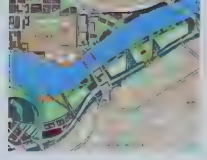
URBAN DESIGN AWARDS



WILLO VON MOLTKE AWARDS FOR URBAN DESIGN

79 CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares
Greenberg Consultants
North Point
Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville, Massachusetts

80 Koetter Kim & Associates
Toronto East Bayfront Plan
Toronto

SPECIAL CITATIONS

81 Physical Plan
Chan Krieger & Associates
Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Framework Plan
Washington, DC

82 A Bold and Integrative Concept
Cooper Robertson & Partners
Memphis Riverfront Development Master Plan
Memphis, Tennessee

83 Urban Element
Rogers Marvel Architects
Financial District Streetscape and Security
New York City

JURY:

Maxine Griffith AICP
City Planning Commission
Philadelphia

Alfreda Radzicki AIA
Gruzen Samton
New York City

David Spillane AICP
Goody Clancy
Boston

Jeanne Van Orman AICP
Places
Arlington Heights, Massachusetts

JURY COMMENTS:

The predominant — and probably not surprising — impression we received from this body of work is that current investments in urban design are focused nationally on waterfronts, as urban leaders try to determine how best to reconnect cities to our post-industrial waterfronts. The submissions included not only urban design proposals but also portfolios reflecting a bold concept, or an exceptional physical element in an urban setting, or well done plans that, while containing urban-design elements, did not constitute urban design proposals. As we reviewed all of these portfolios, we tried to come to consensus on what good urban design is. One juror recalled a teacher who defined urban design as "the place where architecture kisses planning." Others of us noted that urban design should convey what it feels like to be in a specific place. While a single building can contribute to good urban design, it is the relationship of buildings to each other, to open space, and to paths of movement that create a pleasing urban ensemble. We all agreed that a good urban design proposal should reflect a shared vision that can be implemented.

With these rough definitions in mind, we have elected to recognize two submissions with the Willo von Moltke Award for Urban Design, which is the designation of the honor awards in this program. Willo von Moltke, as many will recall, was the inspirational urban designer/educator who taught for many years at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. We have also identified three projects for special recognition.

Editor's note: This awards program is co-sponsored by the AIA New York Chapter. The full text of jury comments, including responses to individual projects and advice on preparing submissions, may be found at www.architects.org/awards.

WILLO VON MOLTKE AWARD FOR URBAN DESIGN

North Point
Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville, Massachusetts

Developer/development manager:
Spaulding & Slye Colliers
Guilford Transportation Industries

Master planners:
Greenberg Consultants
Toronto
www.greenbergconsultants.com

CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares
Boston
www.cbtarchitects.com

Phase I team:
CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares (Parcel S residential building); Architects Alliance (Parcel T residential building); Andres Mignucci Arquitectos (marketing/exhibition pavilion); Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (Central Park)

Renderings:
Spaulding & Slye Colliers

North Point is envisioned as a unique 21st-century neighborhood, transforming underutilized industrial land into a vibrant community with 2,700 residences, over 2.2 million square feet of commercial space, a 10-acre park, and retail space to support 24-hour activities of residents, workers, and visitors.

WILLO VON MOLTKE AWARD FOR URBAN DESIGN
Toronto East Bayfront Plan
Toronto

Client:
Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation

Architect:
Koetter Kim & Associates
Boston
www.koetterkim.com

Project team:
Susie Kim AIA; Fred Koetter FAIA; Giles Moore; Simon Bradbury; Gordon Grisinger

Consultants:
Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg (parks and public space); GHK International (urban planning and revitalization); Sustainable Edge (sustainable design); BA Group (transportation planning)

The Toronto Waterfront Plan revitalizes an underutilized downtown waterfront with sustainable mixed-use development that establishes a new public destination as well as a true urban neighborhood. The plan capitalizes on the last and best opportunity for Toronto's city center to establish a positive and meaningful relationship with its lake frontage.

SPECIAL CITATION FOR A PHYSICAL PLAN
Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Framework Plan
Washington, DC

Client:
District of Columbia Office of Planning

Architect/framework plan coordinator:
Chan Krieger & Associates
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.chankrieger.com

Consultants:
Hamilton, Rabinowitz & Alschuler (market and strategic planning advisor); Wallace Roberts & Todd (landscape planning); Beyer Blinder Belle (urban design); Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects (urban design); Simon Martin-Vegue Winkelstein & Morris (urban design); Greenberg Consultants (urban design); Gorove/Slade Associates (traffic planning); The Louis Berger Group (environmental engineering)

Report credits:
Illustrator:
McCann Illustrations

Communications:
Women Like Us; Capitol Hill Partners; Toni Thomas Associates; Group 360; Justice & Sustainability; Picador Multimedia; Roberson Design; Steven Garfinkel Associates; Pentagram Design, Inc.; Interface Multimedia

Special Advisors:
Nate Gross; Bing Thom; Linda Howard; Jonathan Barnett

This plan defined 10 design guidelines: accentuate the series of river basins; add variety to the water's edge; create continuity along the river corridor; supply perpendicular transportation corridors and river crossings; provide activity nodes/community centers; add substantial housing along the river; create destinations/special places; increase citywide assets; overcome highways; and reach the Potomac.

SPECIAL CITATION FOR
A BOLD AND INTEGRATIVE CONCEPT
Memphis Riverfront Development Master Plan
Memphis, Tennessee

Client:
Riverfront Development Corporation

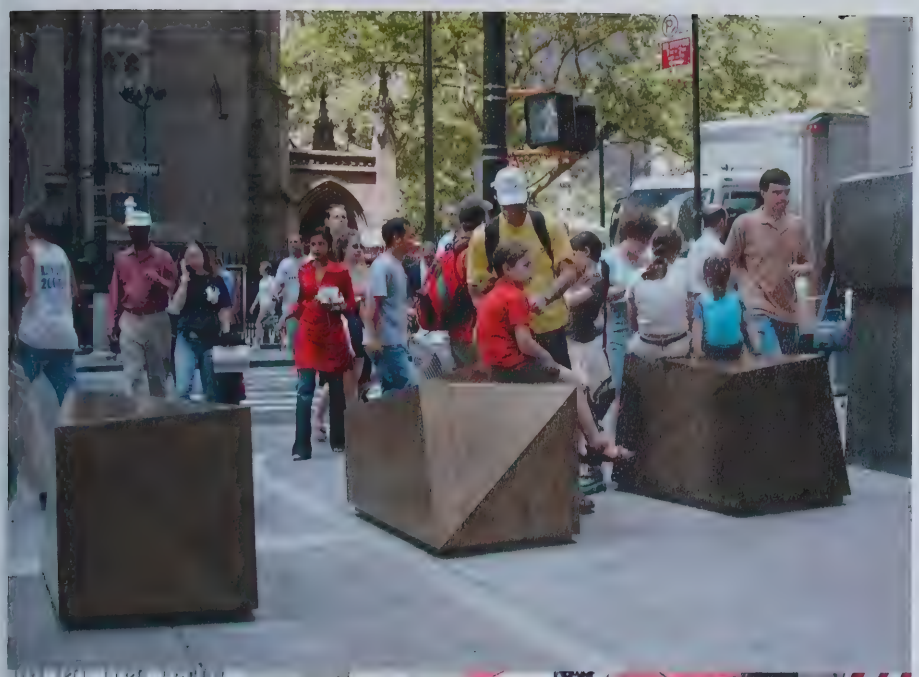
Architect:
Cooper Robertson & Partners
New York City
www.cooperrobertson.com

Project team:
Brian Shea AIA; Randall Morton AIA

Consultants:
Civitas, Inc. (landscape); Self-Tucker Architects (local architect); Hamilton Rabinowitz & Alschuler (economic consultant); Tetra Tech (engineering consultant); Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin Lopez Rinehart (traffic consultant)

Images:
Randall Morton AIA/Cooper, Robertson & Partners (photographs); Michael McCann (watercolor renderings)

The future story of Memphis begins with the Mississippi River. The Riverfront Master Plan endeavors to reunite the city and the river with an active downtown waterfront. The river's annual rise and fall of 50 feet provide the setting for a dramatic harbor, Memphis's new "front door."



SPECIAL CITATION FOR AN URBAN ELEMENT
Financial District Streetscape and Security
New York City

Client:
New York City Department of City Planning
The New York City Economic Development Corporation
The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation

Architect:
Rogers Marvel Architects
New York City
www.rogersmarvel.com

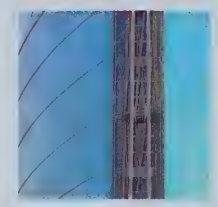
Contractor:
Bovis Lend Lease

Consultants:
Quennell Rothschild & Partners (landscape); Weidlinger Associates (structural); Ducibella Venter & Santore (security); Philip Habib & Associates (traffic); Vollmer Associates (civil)

Images:
Rogers Marvel Architects

The New York Financial District Streetscape and Security project balances the issues and contradictions of enabling vibrant public space while installing increased security. The comprehensive urban design plan produces a new security architecture by artfully knitting the security operations with the cultural and historic landmarks of the Financial District.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AWARDS



AWARDS

85 Arrowstreet
Artists for Humanity EpiCenter
South Boston

86 Perkins Eastman
Felician Sisters Convent and Sacred Heart High School
Coraopolis, Pennsylvania

CITATIONS

87 Einhorn Yaffee Prescott with Helfand Architecture
Unified Science Center
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

87 Gund Partnership
National Association of Realtors Headquarters
Washington, DC

88 Perry Dean Rogers | Partners Architects
60 Oxford Street
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

JURY:

Dan Arons AIA
Architerra
Boston
(co-chair, BSA Committee on the Environment)

Hillary Brown AIA
New Civic Works
New York City

Lynne Deninger AIA
Sasaki Associates
Watertown, Massachusetts

Bruce Fowle FAIA
Fox & Fowle Architects
New York City

Kevin Settlemyre
The Green Roundtable
Cambridge, Massachusetts

JURY COMMENTS:

Absent from many submissions this year was clearly articulated attention to site and water-use issues — site orientation, for example, was often unexplained. Even narrative and text on energy-efficiency issues was surprisingly sparse. However, it was evident that many of the basics of sustainability were addressed by most submitters. Nevertheless, too often many of us still seem to think of sustainable design as a checklist of steps we should take to call our projects "sustainable" — genuine intellectual integration of sustainability in our design thinking and practice still seems distant. We agree with previous juries in this program who have defined "sustainable design" as "integrated design," that is, the investigation by the entire project team of all the issues that constitute design in the broadest sense. When aesthetic design is also sustainable design, as another jury has noted, then a fully integrated design result is evident. We all need to keep striving toward the reality that beautiful work is sustainable work.

We also noted the number of projects that pursued or are pursuing LEED certification. LEED is a useful tool in establishing a sustainable-design framework within a project process, providing metrics to quantify performance in certain categories, and enhancing the dialogue around sustainable issues in general. However, it seems clear that it is often easier to focus so much on LEED certification that attention to innovative design may be diminished. We must remember to tell the sustainable story behind the checklist and explain how a project actually reflects and incorporates a climate-responsive approach.

With all this in mind, we ultimately elected not to recognize any submission with what is typically referred to as the top-tier "honor award" — rather we have chosen to recognize six projects with awards and citations. We believe these six projects begin to suggest the possibilities of sustainable design as a driver of successful, beautiful design.

Editor's note: In addition to the projects listed here, the jury awarded a Citation to "Boarding School," a project submitted by Pierre Tourre of Montpellier, France. Photographs and additional project credits were not available at press time.

Editor's note: The full text of jury comments, including responses to individual projects and advice on preparing submissions, may be found at www.architects.org/awards.

AWARD
Artists for Humanity EpiCenter
South Boston

Client:
Artists for Humanity

Architect:
Arrowstreet
Somerville, Massachusetts
www.arrowstreet.com

Project team:
James Batchelor AIA; Patricia Cornelison AIA; Anthony Iacovina AIA

Contractor:
T.R. White Company

Consultants:
Building Science Engineering (sustainability); Rene Mugnier Associates (structural); Zade Company (mechanical/electrical); Nick Rodrigues (sculpture)

Photographer:
Richard Mandelkorn

The Artists for Humanity EpiCenter is home to an innovative art and entrepreneurship program serving at-risk urban high school students. Sustainability, on a tight budget, was critical to the client's program. The design features unusual applications for inexpensive industrial materials, while keeping the volume and massing as simple as possible.

AWARD
Felician Sisters Convent and Sacred Heart High School
Coraopolis, Pennsylvania

Client:
Felician Sisters of Pennsylvania

Architect:
Perkins Eastman
Pittsburgh
www.perkinseastman.com

Project team:
J. David Hoglund FAIA; Stefani Danes AIA; Laura Nettleton; Scott Fitzgerald; Laurie Butler NCIDQ; Arch Pelley AIA, AICP; Lisa Granger; Rita Edelman; Kris Kennedy; Matt Hansen; Sean Beasley; William Brocius; Dorothy Moyta; Vic Curti; Dana Ceraso; Lisa Doerfler; Joseph Nagy

Contractor:
Sota Construction Services

Consultants:
Clearview Project Services (materials reuse); Elwood S. Tower Corporation (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); The Gateway Engineers (civil); Rolf Sauer and Partners (landscape); The Kachele Group (structural); Food Facilities Corporation (food facility design)

Photographer:
Denmarsh Photography

This project, which includes a 75-room assisted-living home and 330-student high school, provides a secure environment for the Sisters, a base for those in active ministry, a functional headquarters for administrators, an updated setting for students, and a LEED Gold model for reuse of materials and stewardship of natural resources.

CITATION
Unified Science Center
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

Architects:
Einhorn Yaffee Prescott
Boston
www.eypae.com

Helfand Architecture
New York City
www.helfandarch.com

Project team:
Einhorn Yaffee Prescott: Cahal Stephens AIA, FRIAI (principal-in-charge); Kip Ellis (project manager); Lila Khalvati AIA (project architect); Yelena Lembersky AIA; Jay Hallinan AIA; Nikolas Dando Haenisch AIA; Mary Killough IIDA; Michele Webb; Ralph Gifford PE; Andy Hebert PE; Kieran Guinan; Jim Boyle RCDD

Helfand Architecture: Margaret Helfand FAIA (design principal); John Tinmouth, Jennifer Tulley Stevenson (project architects); Tom Chang; Elisa Testa

Construction manager:
Skanska Mid-Atlantic

Consultants:
R.W. Sullivan (plumbing/fire protection); Christakis VanOcker Morrison (structural); Gladnick Wright Salmeda (civil); M.L. Baird & Co. (landscape); NASCO Construction Services (cost estimating); Cavanaugh Tocci Associates (acoustics); FutureSys Design (audio-visual); Renfro Design Group (lighting);

Photographers:
Jeff Goldberg/Esto;
Einhorn Yaffee Prescott (top)

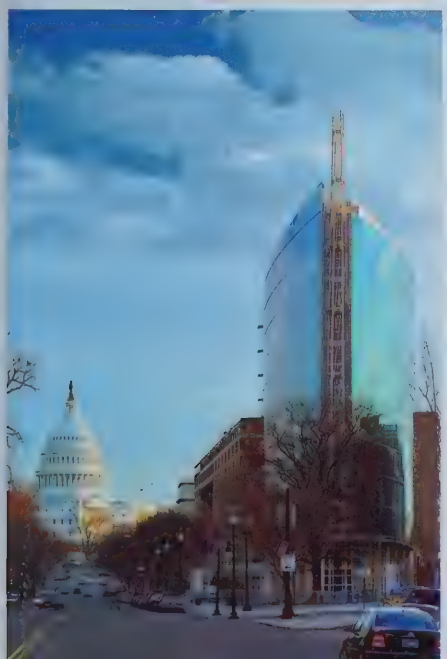
The Swarthmore campus is enhanced by a 68,000-square-foot renovation and 80,000-square-foot addition that creates an improved environment for the study of the sciences. This facility contains teaching and research laboratories, classrooms, and informal interaction spaces. The building is LEED-certified and celebrates Swarthmore's commitment to the environment and its arboretum.

CITATION
National Association of Realtors Headquarters
Washington, DC

Client:
National Association of Realtors

Design architect:
Gund Partnership
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.gundpartnership.com

Project team:
Graham Gund FAIA; Eric Svahn AIA; Meng Howe Lim AIA; Matt Formicola, Assoc. AIA; Tom Maloney; Yun Lee; Michael Blutt



Architect of record:
SMB Architects

Construction manager:
CarrAmerica Development

Developer:
Lawrence N. Brandt

Consultants:
Fernandez & Associates (structural); E.K. Fox & Associates (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); Vanderweil Engineers (design engineer); CAS Engineering (civil/survey); Oehme van Sweden & Associates (landscape); Natural Logic (LEED); George Sexton Associates (lighting); Designsmith (graphics)

Photographer:
Alan Karchmer

This former brownfield site is the first new construction in the nation's capital to achieve silver LEED certification. An unusual triangular site, just three blocks from the US Capitol, and the client's mission, drove the sustainable solution. The curved high-performance coated glass reflects changing conditions of sun and clouds, summer and winter.

CITATION
60 Oxford Street
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Client:
The President and Fellows of Harvard College
Harvard Real Estate Services

Architect:
Perry Dean Rogers | Partners Architects
Boston
www.perrydean.com

Construction manager:
Lee Kennedy Company

Consultants:
Michael Van Valkenburgh (landscape); LeMessurier Consultants (structural); Einhorn Yaffee Prescott (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); Rolf Jensen Associates (code); Bryant Associates (civil); Haley & Aldrich (geotechnical); Arup (façade); Kugler Tillotson (lighting); Kalin Associates (specifications); Campbell McCabe (hardware); Cavanaugh Tocci (acoustics); Gale Associates (waterproofing); Facility Dynamics (commissioning)

Photographer:
Michael Moran

The project, which includes labs, classrooms, and offices, connects the institutional scale of Harvard's buildings to the residential scale of the Agassiz neighborhood. The interior provides a 100-foot-by-100-foot uninterrupted floor plan. The two-story corner pavilion, courtyard, and glass-enclosed building lobby present a finer scale to the community.

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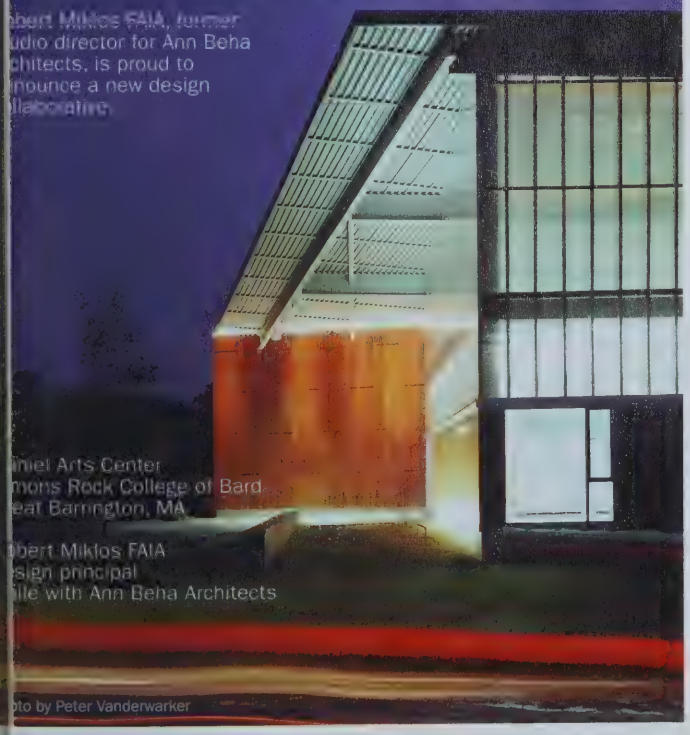

niel Arts Center
mons Rock College of Bard
eat Barrington, MA

bert Miklos FAIA
sign principal
ile with Ann Beha Architects

oto by Peter Vanderwarker

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Elizabeth B. Hall Chapel at Concord Academy
Architect: Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott
Photography: DamianosPhotography.com

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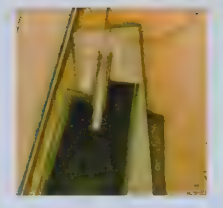
UNBUILT ARCHITECTURE AWARDS



HONOR AWARDS

91 Anderson Anderson Architecture
Wurster Hall Fabrication Workshop
College of Environmental Design
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California

92 Gabriel Fuentes, Assoc. AIA
Architecture as Contextual (Re) Interpretation: A Mixed-Use Cultural Center
Old Havana, Cuba

93 Johannes M.P. Knoops
Unmasking Foundations in Pools of Pleasure (swimming, diving, and reflecting pools)
Trajan's Aqueduct and the American Academy
Rome

94 Pique[´] Architecture Collaborative
Vertical Patio
Seattle, Washington

95 Kei Takeuchi
Bilbao Footbridge
Bilbao, Spain

96 University of Arkansas Community Design Center
Emergent Organizations: A Garden of Trees for Two Rivers Park
Little Rock, Arkansas

JURY:

Henry Moss AIA
Bruner/Cott & Associates
Cambridge, Massachusetts
Chair

Rebecca Barnes FAIA
Brown University
Providence, Rhode Island

Skip Burck ASLA
Richard Burck Associates
Somerville, Massachusetts

John Hong AIA
SINGLE speed DESIGN
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Marilys Nepomechie FAIA
Florida International University
School of Architecture
Miami, Florida

Juan Frano Violich AIA
Kennedy & Violich Architecture
Boston

Nick Winton AIA
Anmahian Winton Architects
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Editor's note: The full text of jury comments, including responses to individual projects and advice on preparing submissions, may be found at www.architects.org/awards.

JURY COMMENTS:

This year we received 96 entries and six of these seemed to honor the spirit of this program most effectively. The most stimulating projects were the least narrow in their focus. They also exhibited an interdisciplinary quality in both conception and outcome, often taking pleasure in ambiguity and elusive imagery.

Submitted projects tend to fall in three general categories: competent real-world proposals in their more developed schematic-design phases; more polemical site-specific proposals (perhaps these were competition entries); and more visionary proposals that push at the social/cultural/technological boundaries of architecture itself. Projects in the latter category present a fertile and important territory for the future of design practices. However, many of the intellectually ambitious proposals from the third category, although fresh in their ideas, lack a rigorously defined goal and a convincing research methodology. This year's jurors invite future designers to recognize this important role of the unbuilt and explore ways to demonstrate that theoretical projects can make a significant contribution to current architectural practice.

Each year, the Unbuilt Architecture Award receives a number of strong images for unbuilt high-rise projects. This year's jurors commented on a common characteristic of proposals for high-rise buildings that is disappointing — the designers' lack of concern about how the buildings connect to their sites and cities at ground level. The tower remains the most romantic architectural invention of the 20th century. Height remains an unquestioned, privileged architectural attribute. Height alone may serve as an excuse for designers to limit the application of their passion to how tall forms are generated, how building skins can transcend materiality, how massing can go beyond the visual constraints of extruded forms and tapered polygons. Over time, this program's jurors — a different group of professionals every year — have noted the self-referential, mechanistic quality of unbuilt high-rise projects put forward by design teams in nationally significant firms. Some of these have been elegant objects.

Tall buildings continue to be important technologically, but their urban placement and street-level resolution is unaccountably ignored. The street impact of tall buildings is enormous and we invite future designers who submit tall buildings to this award program to respond to the neglected challenge of how they can fruitfully meet the ground.

HONOR AWARD

Wurster Hall Fabrication Workshop
College of Environmental Design
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California

Designer:
Anderson Anderson Architecture
San Francisco
www.andersonanderson.com

This CAD-CAM fabrication shop and courtyard reflect the cellular functionality of the original building, with its didactically exposed systems. The addition follows the existing frame geometry, but employs translucent materials and CAD-CAM fabrication processes to produce a simple, rectilinear enclosure with a wire-taut, environmentally active structural skin.

HONOR AWARD
Architecture as Contextual (Re) Interpretation: A Mixed-Use Cultural Center
Old Havana, Cuba

Designer:
Gabriel Fuentes, Assoc. AIA
Miami, Florida

This project addresses contextual design in the city, particularly the design of contemporary architecture in historic places. The methodology includes exploration of social, cultural, and historical issues as critical aspects of the definition of "context." The architecture embodies synthesis between old and new ideas.

HONOR AWARD

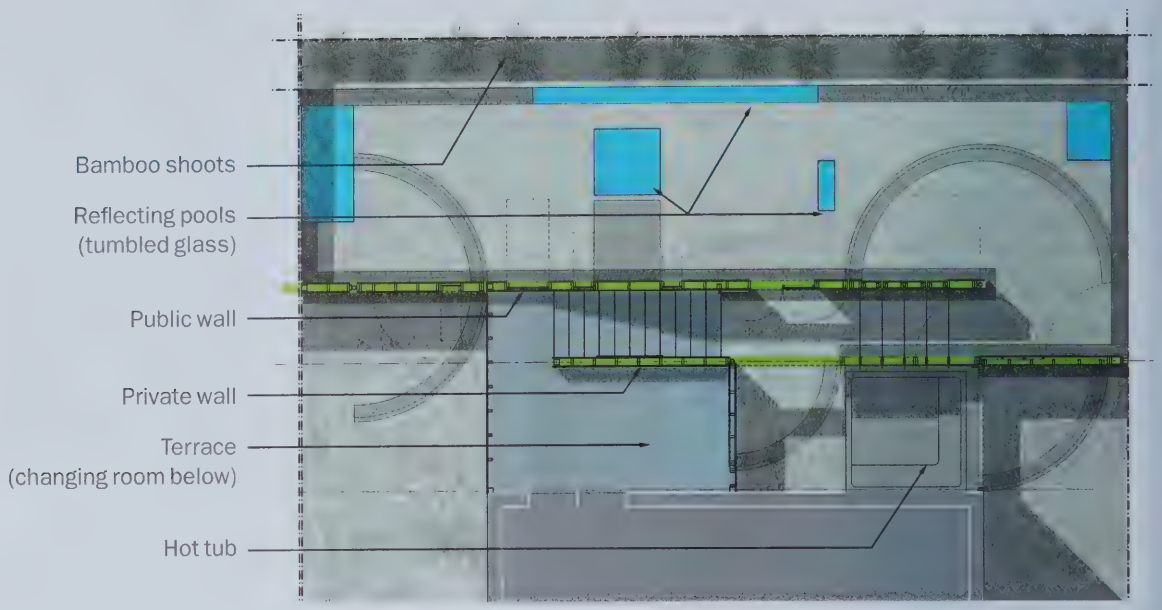
Unmasking Foundations in Pools of Pleasure

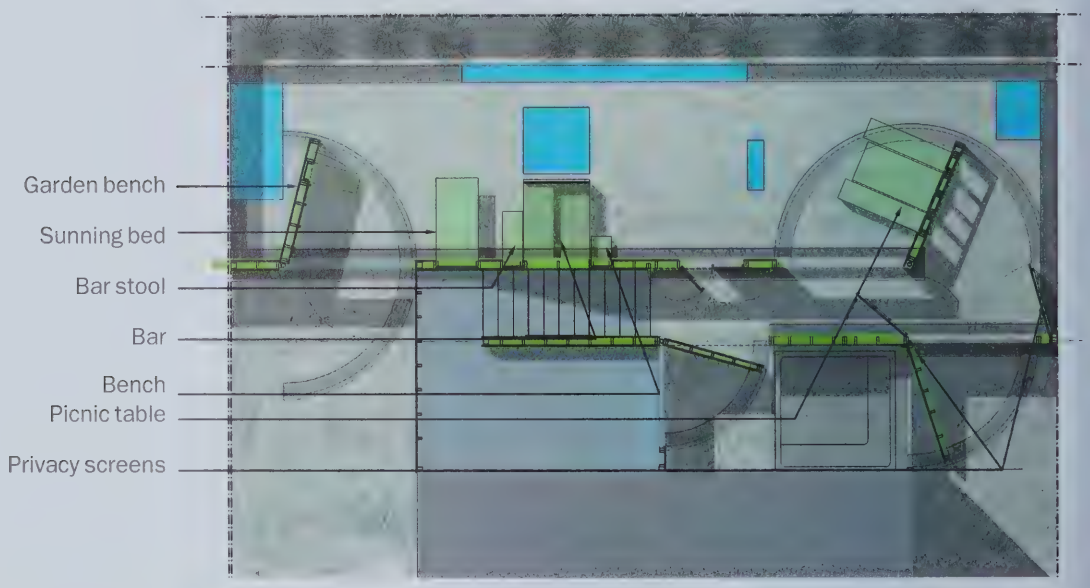
Swimming, diving, and reflecting pools
Trajan's Aqueduct and the American Academy
Rome

Designer:

Johannes M.P. Knoops
New York City
www.knoops.us

Pushing the boundaries of preservation to expose more than ancient rubble, this "argument against historic preservation" is part of an ongoing series dedicated to the telling of memories, myths, and meanings. Past significance and present desires become unlikely bedmates as Trajan's Aqueduct is revealed in pools for the American Academy in Rome.



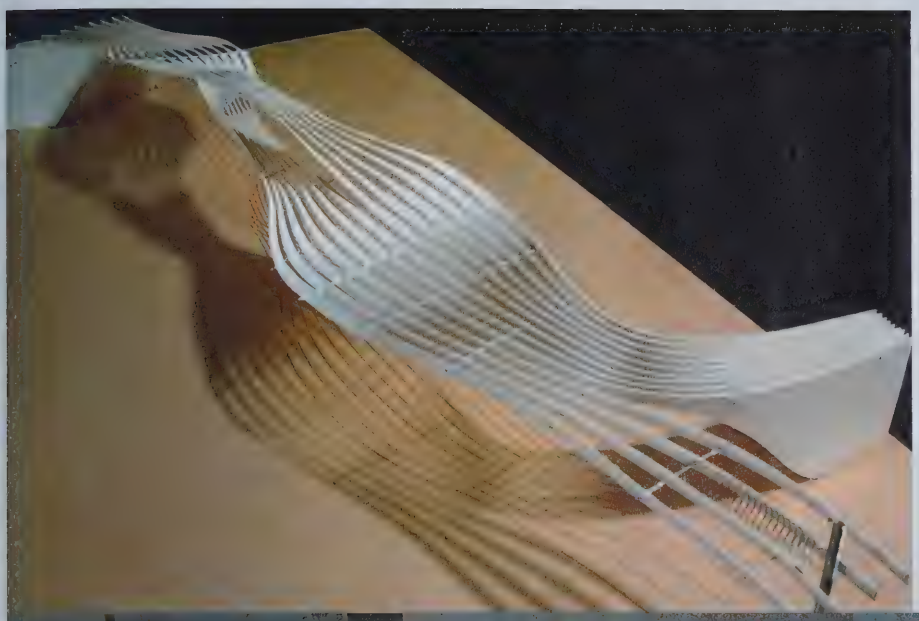


HONOR AWARD

Vertical Patio
Seattle, Washington

Designer:
Pique[´] Architecture Collaborative
Seattle, Washington
www.piquearchitecture.com

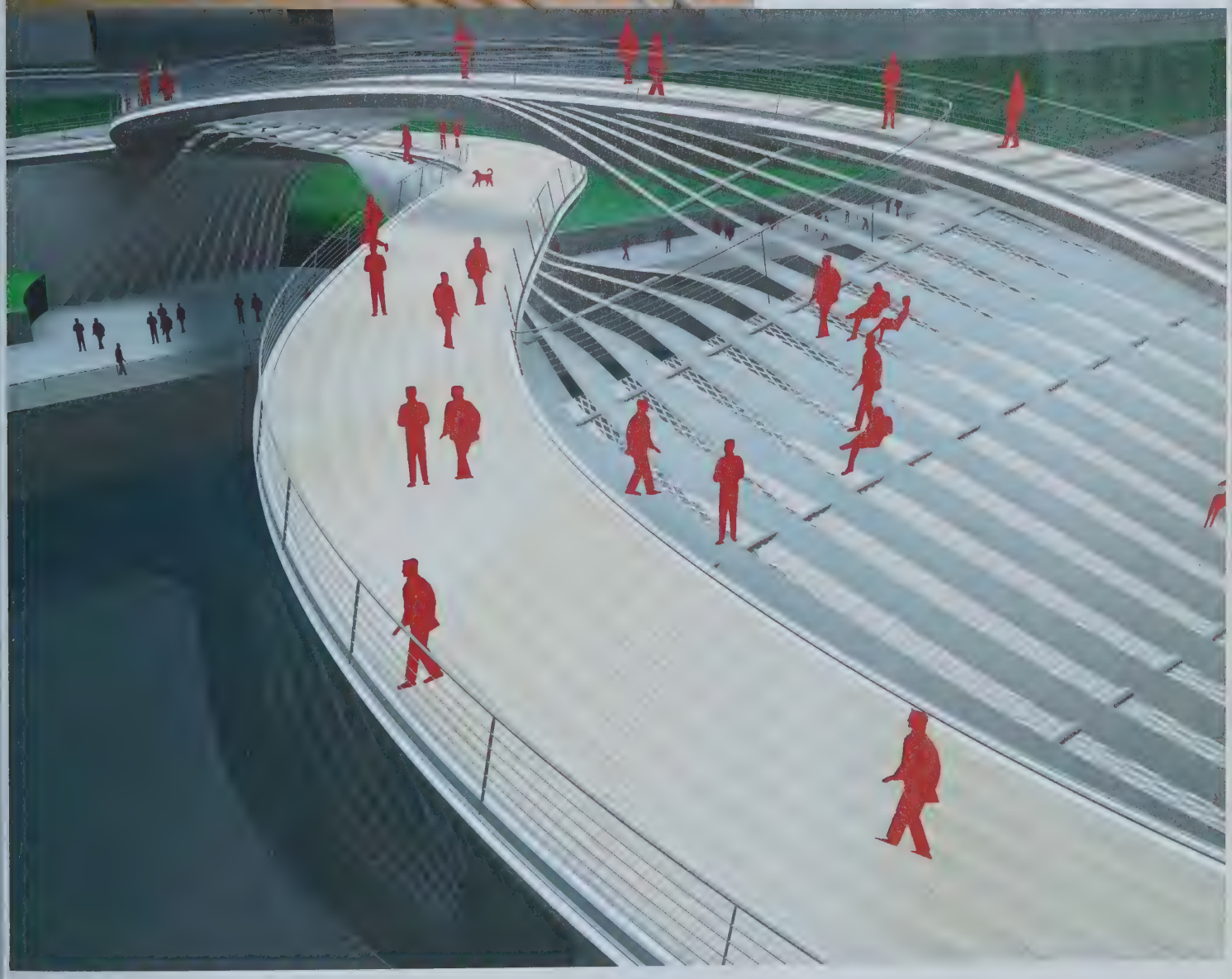
This patio accommodates many activities in the backyard of a tight urban lot, while also maintaining as much open area as possible. The resulting design features two vertical walls with moveable components that create a wide array of situational configurations that provide both privacy and gathering spaces.



HONOR AWARD
Bilbao Footbridge
Bilbao, Spain

Designer:
Kei Takeuchi
Cambridge, Massachusetts

This project proposes a bridge that is a network of connectivity between humanism and technology. The idea is to subdivide the whole structure into steel stripes that offer unique experiences for pedestrians. The bridge joins versatile ideas and elements in a coherent entity.



HONOR AWARD
Emergent Organizations: A Garden of Trees for Two Rivers Park
Little Rock, Arkansas

Designer:
University of Arkansas Community Design Center

Project team:
Jeff Shannon AIA; Steve Luoni, Assoc. AIA; Aaron Gabriel, Assoc. AIA; John McWilliams; Anna Wilcox; Laura Chioldi; Laurie Fields; Pattie Erwin

The garden's planting design will highlight indigenous tree species, keeping in mind that most people — as the client observes — often "fail to see the trees from the forest." Identifiable arboreal spatial arrangements like alleés, bosques, hammocks, and groves will form outdoor rooms to create a living instructional center along the Little Rock Recreation Corridor.

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SPECIAL AWARDS

Every year, BSA members and their colleagues are honored nationally for their contributions to design, to the profession, and to the communities they serve. During 2005, such recognition included:

AIA Honor Award for Regional and Urban Design
Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Framework Plan
Chan Krieger & Associates
Cambridge, Massachusetts

North Allston Strategic Framework for Planning
Goody Clancy
Boston

Northeastern University West Campus Masterplan
William Rawn Associates
Boston

Topaz Medallion for Excellence in Architectural Education
Edward Allen FAIA

AIA Institute Honors for Collaborative Achievement
ArchVoices (nominated by the BSA)

Thomas Jefferson Award
Diane Georgopulos FAIA

Young Architects Award
Jeff DeGregorio AIA

Elevated to AIA College of Fellows
Diane Georgopulos FAIA
Jack Hobbs FAIA
George Thrush FAIA

Each year, the BSA also identifies architects, colleagues, and institutions deserving special recognition for their contribution to the architectural community and to the enrichment of the built and natural environments. In 2005, the BSA conferred these honors:

BSA Award of Honor
Joan Goody FAIA

Commonwealth Award
Adaptive Environments

BSA Fellows Award for Excellence in Teaching
Julia Nugent AIA

Women in Design Award of Excellence
Jennifer Jones
Maryann Thompson AIA
Valerie Fletcher

Honorary BSA
Alice Friedman, Hon. BSA

Left to right: Edward Allen FAIA; Diane Georgopulos FAIA; Jeff DeGregorio AIA; Jack Hobbs FAIA; George Thrush FAIA.

Left to right: Joan Goody FAIA; Alice Friedman, Hon. BSA; Jennifer Jones; Maryann Thompson AIA; Valerie Fletcher.

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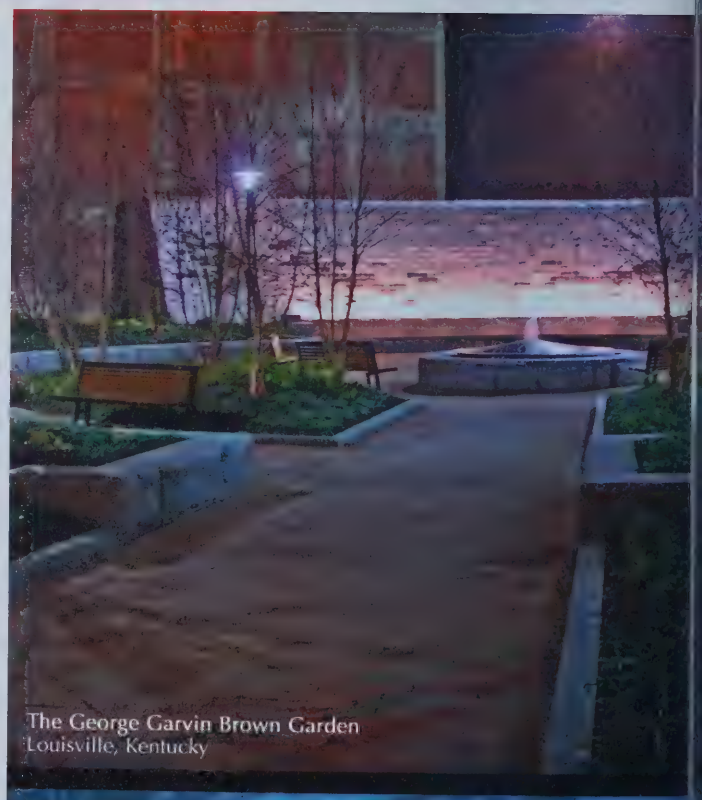

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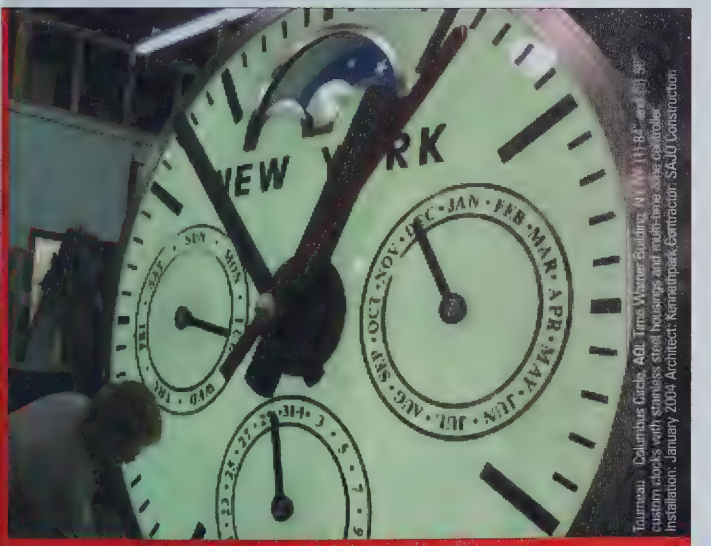

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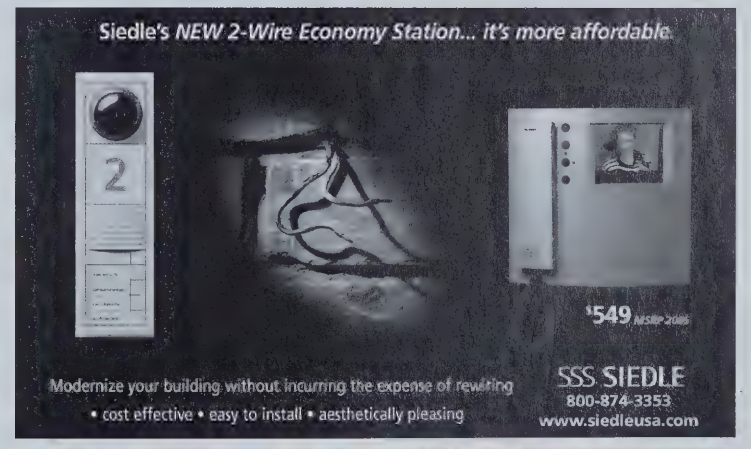

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>
> The building stands with dignity on its site, neither calling undue attention to itself nor resigning its role as a space-defining object in the overall campus plan. The façades are composed but active, with a balance that can only be achieved by careful proportioning of surfaces, openings, and architectural elements.
>
> The Committee noted that such a complex laboratory building has been solved with such apparent lack of effort in plan. The interior details function to strengthen the building as a well-integrated design. Even the view of the roof recapitulates the plan, explains the section, and clearly becomes another carefully considered façade.

With the recent construction of Frank Gehry's Stata Center — which seems designed with the very goal of calling undue attention to itself — and the recent renovation of Dreyfus itself (see page 65), Pei's laboratory "of quiet beauty" and "dignity" represents a different approach to academic design and very different attitudes about the nature of scientific inquiry. ■

The winner of the 2005 Harleston Parker Medal is the College of Computer and Information Science and Residence Hall at Northeastern University, by William Rawn Associates. See page 31.

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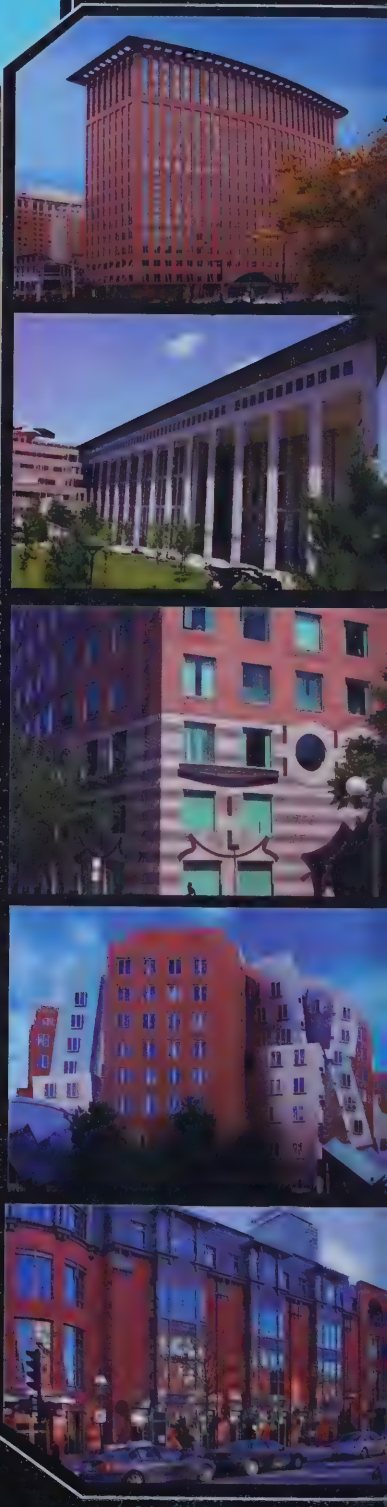

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Cover: Detail, "Kyu Sung, John, Jinhee, January 18, 2006." © 2006 Elsa Dorfman.

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Generations

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Age: The Final Frontier

Attentive readers of the *ArchitectureBoston* online editorial calendar — and we know they are numerous, dedicated, and in need of a hobby — will notice that the theme for this issue was originally billed as "Age." The journey from the Age issue to the Generations issue tells a lot about attitudes in our culture. We had planned an objective exploration of the influence of age on the design professions as well as on building and product design. Instead we found that discussions of age became synonymous with discussions of aging. Before we knew it, our March/April issue threatened to morph into the Boomer issue. And even boomers are sick of talking about boomers.

By shifting the discussion to generations, we hope to restore some of the objectivity we had originally intended. "Generations" suggests connections, not only because of implied cohorts of related birthdays, but also because a generation cannot be defined without reference to the people who were born before and after. Those connections deserve a close look, because they have profound social and economic implications. Somewhere between sighs about "kids these days" and muttered complaints about geezers lies the opportunity to change the way we look at the world, not only to provide a more comfortable old age for retirees, but also to provide more choices and a more comfortable life for their children and grandchildren.

According to the MIT AgeLab, within the next few years, 50 percent of the European Union's population will be over 65 years old. By 2030, retirees in Italy will outnumber active workers. Similar statistics saturate the news every day; the Chinese might call 2006 the Year of the Dog, but the media know this as The Year the Boomers Turned 60. This means that policymakers are suddenly ramping up discussions about aging populations, marketing people who have not been paying attention are suddenly rediscovering the spending power of an entire demographic, and politicians will begin the search for new ways to court favor with an activist voting bloc increasingly in need of government aid. All of which will probably turn off tens of millions of Gen-Xers and Millennials who are trying to navigate around the potholes of daily life.

Architect Michael Crosbie predicts that design with a new perspective on aging will supplant sustainability as the hot topic in architecture in the next decade. Certainly, the looming size of the over-65 population joins the civil-rights and feminist movements as an agent of profound social change. Beyond the earnest examinations of ageism that will surely come our way lies the steady if too-quiet mantra of universal design advocates: what is good for one is often good for many. Their observation that a wheelchair ramp is also a baby-stroller ramp suggests that one way young designers can contend with the frustrations and annoyances of boomer-centricity is to recast the way design problems are presented and solved.

Young designers and entrepreneurs who embrace this shift will find, once again, that need equals opportunity. Product designers are way ahead of building designers in introducing universal design concepts to the marketplace; the beauty and utility of some of the results, such as OXO and Zyliss kitchen utensils, offer the hope that the phrase "universal design" might some day give way simply to "good design." More broadly, universal design attitudes might address a range of issues that are not typically treated as design problems. Already, some daycare centers are offering programs that benefit both the elderly and young children. Community-based delivery services can meet the needs of both housebound elders and working parents. Certainly, some issues of affordable housing, property tax burdens, and homecare assistance could be addressed by promoting accessory apartments — the "apartment over the garage" rented to singles or couples, or perhaps occupied by a caregiver or in-law — a solution largely ignored, a housing advocate once candidly observed, because it lacks a role for developers.

"Generations" suggests connections, not only because of implied cohorts of related birthdays, but also because a generation cannot be defined without reference to the people who were born before and after.

Evidence of the enormity of the social shift ahead can be found in the accelerated creation of euphemisms for old. At some point soon, "boomer" itself will be synonymous with old. In the meantime, the elderly, senior citizens, and golden-agers have given way to retirees, over-65s, seniors, and, increasingly, the aging. Fans of the term seem to have forgotten that we are all aging the minute we are born.

Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA
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Letters Letters Letters

I have enjoyed reading several articles regarding architectural education in recent issues of *ArchitectureBoston*. For the past 38 years, I have been fortunate to practice architecture throughout the United States and in several foreign countries and also to teach in four schools of architecture. During this time, one of my goals has been to help bridge the gap between the world of academia and the realities of practice. It was therefore especially gratifying to read Mark Pasnik's report [January/February 2006] on the Boston design schools and to learn that they are expanding the understanding of global practice in a rapidly changing world.

Richard Green FAIA
Marblehead, Massachusetts

Your Letter from the Editor on "The New Orleans Watershed" [January/February 2006] briefly returns our attention to the devastation of the Gulf South — longer lasting and farther reaching than many care to imagine, with a recovery that will take generations.

A city's physical sense of place reflects over time the culture and character of its residents in material form and detail. They are the place: without them, it's Disney. And even with them, true to the rebirth metaphor, it will take time. It can't be purchased in a moment, but will require significant gestation. Only with the passage of a few generations will the true character of the lost cities of the Gulf Coast or the lost neighborhoods of New Orleans resurface, and only at the hands of their new and returning residents.

Inevitably, a disaster of such magnitude and complexity makes for rich and important intellectual exploration by professionals from the outside looking in: some of it academic head-talking, some as distant communities learn lessons from the Gulf, and some offering specific plans for New Orleans and the Gulf Coast communities. Design and planning professionals have traditionally had the wellness of the communities they serve at heart, and now more than ever it is important that planning efforts keep the residents of these communities of the Gulf South as vested partners in the process — especially those still displaced and interested in returning.

Unprecedented in the last half century, such a challenge is taxing the abilities of those at the helm — both the professional planners, and perhaps more importantly, their various clients. I often wish for my friends down South the rise of some charismatic individual to guide and facilitate this delicate balance of interests and agendas. It doesn't seem to be in the cards, but there is time yet.

William G. Barry, Jr. AIA
Shepley Bulfinch Richardson & Abbott, Architects
Boston

The "25 Years Ago" feature [January/February 2006], which looks back at previous Parker Medal winners, and your recent City Hall issue [May/June 2005] together suggest that we need to rethink our yardsticks for judging historical significance. Maybe 50 years is too early? Maybe age 60 is a better time to make such decisions? It even seems that certain 40-year-old buildings may be the ones most at risk. Regardless of whether anyone or everyone loved them when they were built, something happens in the public consciousness around age 40 that can make them appear tired and useless. Yet if they can only survive to age 60 (or three generations), they are often transformed into something beloved and widely appreciated by everyone. Some places where it's happened: 1930s Miami Beach Deco District hotels, threatened in the '70s, but much admired by the '90s; 1920s motion picture palaces, rediscovered and saved in the '80s; the 1929 Chrysler Building, which went through a slump in public opinion in the '70s. When Boston City Hall turns 60, I'm looking forward to most Bostonians finally feeling an irrational love for the place.

The Foundation for Modern Architecture is compiling a list of similarly notable buildings that survived their slumps, and welcomes any suggestions (send to: laguette@alum.mit.edu). Such a list might help historic commissions and clients become less impatient and relax a little.

Victoria LaGuette, Assoc. AIA
Cambridge, Massachusetts

I noted with amusement the coincidental inclusion, in your January/February 2006 awards issue, of two different images of I.M. Pei's 1970 Dreyfus Chemistry Laboratories at MIT: one showing the building as the 1980 Harleston Parker award winner (for its original construction), and the other as the recent recipient of a Design Citation for our firm's design of its complete renovation.

The building's renovation was a fascinating process that gave us new and unexpected perspectives on Pei's original thinking. While designing this radical interior transformation to accommodate new research standards, equipment, and systems, we discovered that, in spite of Pei's foresight in providing what, at the time, were generous spaces for future systems, almost without exception every dimension of the building was just a bit too small for things to fit easily. One example was Pei's thoughtful inclusion of regularly spaced hexagonal cutouts in the transverse concrete girders that spanned the building, presumably for routing ducts and pipes across the labs. Unfortunately, these openings were too small for the duct sizes necessitated by the new HVAC system, though piping and conduit did fit.

By contrast, an example of prescient planning that did ultimately serve its purpose was Pei's choice to provide three

large utility shafts rising through the building, carrying all the fume hood exhausts and other services. These shafts proved to be well located and reasonably well sized to accommodate most of today's system requirements. One lesson we all might learn as we design new buildings — especially laboratories — is to try to slightly oversize shafts and chases so that future systems might fit more easily. "Loose fit = long life," as Stewart Brand puts it.

Roger N. Goldstein FAIA
Goody Clancy
Boston

"The Pleasure City" roundtable [November/December 2005] presented an interesting and rarely discussed topic and its relationship to architecture. I was disappointed, however, that much was said about event planning and city programming but there was little discussion on the impacts of pleasure in the physical design of the city or building. Janet Marie Smith mentioned streetscape improvements, but I would have been interested to hear more about the impact of pleasure on the built environment or its sensuousness. What would it mean to design a building that allows you to grasp a glimpse of the winter sun or hide in the shade on a hot steamy day in Boston? What would be the implication of imaging a city where you are able to stroll the sidewalks protected from the wind and the rain? A street with arcades or a roof? It has been done, elsewhere. What would it mean to design for the unique quality of a place, as experienced by its geography? The sea breeze and Harborwalk were discussed, but what about the Charles River and the many ponds surrounding Boston? Just imagine if we could immerse ourselves in water and retreat to beautiful bath houses. The possibilities are obviously infinite, but rarely thoroughly discussed. In the culture of leisure and pleasure we are described as living in, the two are often quickly transformed into a commodity, e.g. a ticket to be purchased, a match to attend. The pure pleasure of the senses and architecture as an artistic expression are somewhat forgotten. The challenge is for architects and city builders to value their senses as much as their rational understanding of the built environment. Should professionals be trained differently or, ultimately, is it impossible to teach pleasure?

Nathalie Beauvais RIAC, MAPA
Cambridge, Massachusetts

I read with great interest the roundtable discussion about a Boston School of architecture [September/October 2005]. Being familiar with the work of most of the architects mentioned, I would say that the thing that unites them is their approach to design. That the work is Modern is indisputable: it is rigorous and well thought out. But much of this work, from power plants to performing arts centers, has a lilt and a lyrical quality. I find my eye continually moving across and around the forms of these projects, as if Modernism got its groove back. Unlike the stern Modernism that served as our iconic heritage, these architects allow their buildings to do their work with a smile. If their beliefs could be summed up in a phrase it would be: Form Frolics with Function.

Richard S. Rosen AIA
Silver Spring, Maryland

Corrections to the January/February issue:
Laura Sanden Cabo AIA was the project architect for the National Association of Realtors project on pages 52 and 87. The owner's representative was CarrAmerica Development.

Two members of the project team for the Ensworth School project on page 53 were incorrectly identified. They are Robert Caddigan and Carlos Ridruejo.

Jerry Shereda was the photographer for the Dreyfus Chemistry Laboratories project on page 65.

We want to hear from you. Letters may be e-mailed to epadjen@architects.org or sent to *ArchitectureBoston*, 52 Broad Street, Boston, MA 02109. Letters may be edited for clarity and length, and must include your name, address, and daytime telephone number. Length should not exceed 300 words.

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ArchitectureBoston is mailed to members of the Boston Society of Architects and AIA members in New England and New York City. Subscription rate for others is $26 per year. Call 617.951.1433 x228 or e-mail architectureboston@architects.org.

ArchitectureBoston is custom published bimonthly for the Boston Society of Architects by The Pohly Company.
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The redesign of *ArchitectureBoston* was supported by a grant from the Graham Foundation.

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Fashion in Colors

Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, New York City
December 9, 2005 – March 26, 2006

"Toto, we're not in Kansas anymore." Who can forget that moment in the *Wizard of Oz* when Dorothy steps out of her black-and-white world into a Technicolor dream? Complete color immersion — such is the experience of *Fashion in Colors*, which features 300+ years of Western fashion organized by, yes, color.

Louis Kahn described light as a substantive material; this exhibition makes clear that color is, too. At the same time, by immersing us in rooms of one single color, color falls away and loses its substance; we notice instead variations in structure, pattern, texture, detail, and form.

The show's premise is wonderfully simple, and that, indeed, is its strength. Mannequins are largely unadorned, except for their dress. A single panel of text in each room explains each color's cultural, historical, and commercial significance.

Because the garments are generally not organized by style or chronology, relationships between the pieces become more obvious. Outlandish contemporary fashion becomes accessible: we can see that the 2002 Watanabe denim and 1874 French silk day dress are similar in bodice, bustle, and construction. Unfortunately, the necessarily linear presentation in some long, narrow galleries undercuts this sort of serendipity.

The exhibition is immediately appealing to anyone who has ever deliberated over a color selection, but it also forces viewers to look carefully and to think. According to its curators, *Fashion in Colors* "examines changing perceptions of color through various ages and cultures." Of course, to really justify that claim, the exhibition would need to expand its focus. Perhaps the Cooper-Hewitt could start by organizing its entire collection by color.

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA, teaches the architecture studios at Smith College and works with Rogers Marvel Architects.

In Pursuit of Pleasure: Schultze & Weaver and the American Hotel

The Wolfsonian
Miami Beach, Florida
November 13, 2005 – May 28, 2006

When visiting South Beach, take a break from the sun and discover the Wolfsonian museum. Its current exhibition, *In Pursuit of Pleasure: Schultze & Weaver and the American Hotel*, will make you look at Art Deco in a whole new way.

Schultze & Weaver designed some of the great hotels of the '20s and '30s: the Biltmore in Los Angeles; the Waldorf-Astoria and Pierre in New York; Roney Plaza in Miami Beach. The exhibition includes furniture, clothing, and objects, as well as detailed perspectives and intricately inked plans on linen. (As later hotel designs became more modest, even the drawings seemed less glamorous.) The exhibition concludes with Miami's luxury hotel comeback in the '50s with Morris Lapidus and the Fontainebleau.

Two excellent publications accompany the exhibition: *Grand Hotels of the Jazz Age: the Hotels of Schultze & Weaver*; and the Wolfsonian's *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, issue 25, "The American Hotel."

Rachel Cardello is an architect with ADD Inc in Miami Beach.

New Center for Arts and Culture.

Daniel Libeskind AIA and Robert Campbell FAIA

Breaking Ground: A Conversation

Museum of Fine Arts
November 9, 2005

The elusive and unassuming Robert Campbell, Boston's homegrown architecture critic, hosted a glittering night at the Museum of Fine Arts in tweed. He sat opposite Daniel Libeskind of WTC fame and bantered with the black-clad maestro in front of the Hub's benefactors, architects, educators, and intelligentsia. Campbell is one of the sharpest critics around, a Pulitzer recipient, and an architect. Libeskind had been a paper architect for 30 years before he completed the remarkable Jewish Museum in Berlin in 1999. He is the architect for the New Center for Arts and Culture (NCAC) to be built on the Rose Kennedy Greenway.

Three cheers to the NCAC visionaries who correctly wagered that an audience could handle an evening without pictures or PowerPoint. The sold-out crowd came to hear a *conversation* between two quick wits coming from opposite sensibilities, a sort of speed repartee about everything architecture. The two discussed spectacle and representation, Libeskind's virtuosity at the accordion, and the creative process. Libeskind spoke with a Polish accent at a supersonic rate while smiling incessantly. His answers never precisely addressed the questions; like his architecture, his mind worked allegorically.

Example: Campbell noted Libeskind's trademark cowboy boots — black with pointed toes — and the famous glasses that got New Yorkers sprinting to their opticians. Libeskind's comeback — "Everything I do has a point" — warmed the audience to his eccentricities, but kept his inquisitor off the scent. Never straying, Campbell asked which was Libeskind's favorite Boston building. His answer: the Paul Revere House. "But how," asked Campbell incredulously, "could you love something that's completely fake?" No matter, grinned his interviewee, it is a powerful place that provokes a deep sense of history.

When Campbell opened the conversation to questions, hands shot up everywhere. The questions revealed a thoughtful and educated audience. So architects should listen up: there is public interest in the conversations forming our built landscape. And you can leave your laptops at home.

Rachel Levitt is a designer and writer.

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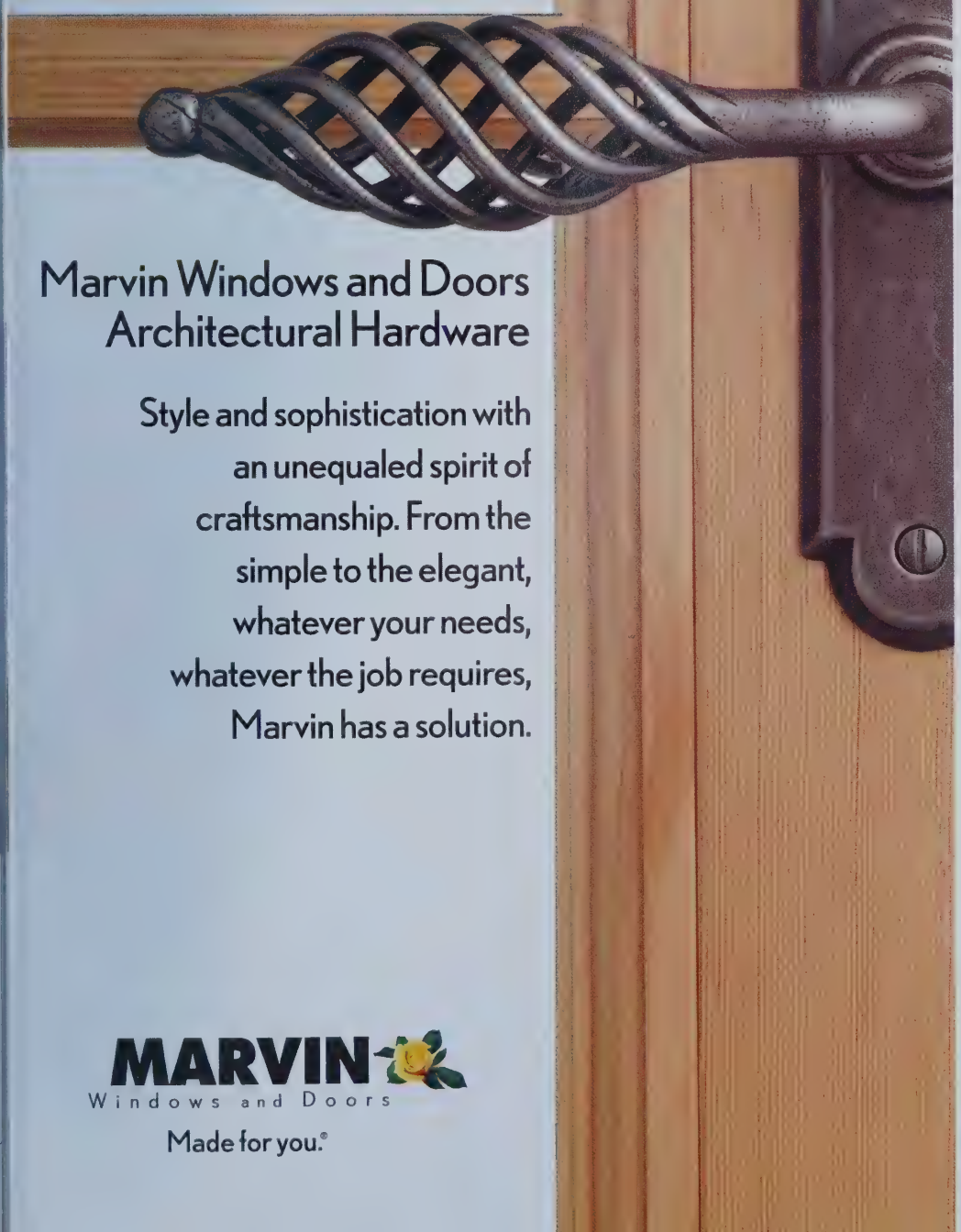

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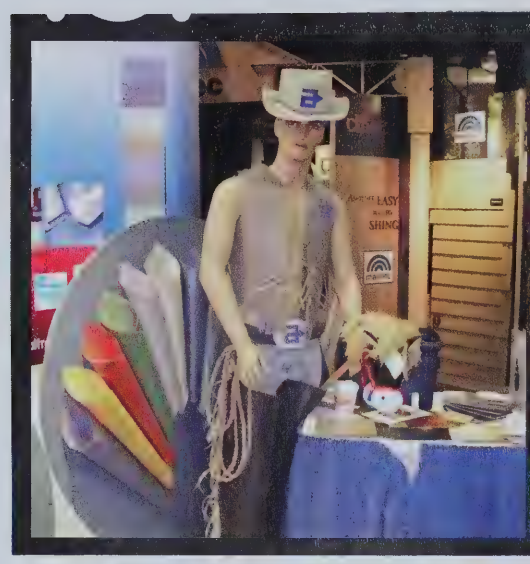

The scene: The exhibition hall of Build Boston, the biggest construction-industry trade show in New England. The place is a zoo. Roughly as long as a football field, and three times as wide. Bright lights, balloons. Thick carpeting keeps the noise level surprisingly low, but the overall effect is clamorous. Hundreds of manufacturers' booths compete for attention from casual wanderers-by, as well as from dedicated customers stopping in to learn about a particular product or service. The vastness of the display is seductive and disorienting. Even with a numbered list of exhibitors, it's hard to re-locate a vendor you visited earlier; like a magical shop in a children's book, a booth can seem to exist and then vanish from the spot you'd have sworn it occupied.

The day:

12:05 "How're you doing today?" A very young sales rep, dressed in a knit polo shirt, his short hair spiky and glistening with gel, stands at the edge of his booth greeting a passer-by, who ignores him. He is undeterred; another potential prospect is nearing. "How're *you* doing today?"

The man and woman running the adjoining booth are much older, formally dressed, silent. They smile shyly, and hand out refrigerator magnets.

12:15 "Accident in transit, huh?" a customer in a window manufacturer's booth asks, pointing at the most prominent display: a window shattered in a cobweb pattern.

The rep chuckles, then turns serious. "Actually, what we're showing now is a lot of this blast-resistant and hurricane-resistant glass." He goes on to explain that since September 11, the Department of Defense has put out new standards regulating how far fragments can penetrate into a room after an explosion. "And as far as the hurricane glass goes, that's tested to Miami-Dade standards by shooting a two-by-four out of a cannon."

12:34 In another window booth — this one belonging to a very big manufacturer — a customer is fiddling with some gizmos inside a window frame. "Those are the stops," the rep says, showing her how to slide them up and down. "Are you an architect?"

"Yes. But I'm not here for a client — I need some new windows in my house." She fingers the mullions. "Are these real dividers or snap-in?"

They spend the next 40 minutes talking windows: warranties; installers in the MetroWest area; a problematic Venturi effect occurring around a hopper window currently installed under her hipped roof; and aluminum's compelling advantages over vinyl (this manufacturer doesn't do vinyl). She asks for color chips. The particular sample she wants is missing; he'd be happy to send it to her. He points to the conference registration tag she wears around her neck, encoded with her name and address. "Did we zap you yet?"

"I haven't been zapped at all today."

1:30 The bartender is standing in his little enclosure with his arms crossed. Now and then he paces to the other side of it with a caged-tiger look of hopeless boredom. Does anyone drink at a trade show these days?

He shakes his head. "Not the way they used to. Too risky."

1:42 A booth displaying decking systems. Two boards, with blobs of ketchup spilled on them. The manufacturer's board doesn't stain, while the competitor's board has turned dark where the ketchup has been sitting on it. "That's because theirs has a higher wood content," the rep says. "Ours is solid-core cellular PVC construction. See, it's scratch-resistant, too." He digs at it with his fingernails. At the other end of the board, another rep is scratching away with his nails for another customer. The booth reeks sweetly of tomatoes.

1:50 Another shattered window, tested to Miami-Dade hurricane standards. This one actually has a two-by-four

protruding from it. The rep explains the cannon test. "Of course, in real life when you do it, the board falls off. We just screwed it onto the glass."

2:12 "ENTER THE CONE OF SILENCE," says a sign. A puffy little grotto made of marshmallow-looking insulation, which apparently has a demonstrable soundproofing effect. A customer stands inside the cone, while the company representative, spiffy in blue blazer and bow tie, stands outside the cone, yelling.

2:30 A very small booth with six sales reps, in matching logoed blue button-down shirts. One mutters quietly to the others: "I think we're scaring people away. There are too many of us."

3:10 Behind the door of a stall in the ladies' room, a woman is talking on her cell phone.

"Well, at least *try* to get him to take a nap."

3:14 At another window booth — one of the few that doesn't feature a shattered window as part of the display — the rep is extolling the benefits of vinyl. "It's the only way to go. It's energy-efficient, it's reliable. We make our own — we buy it in powder form and extrude it. At some point, someone will figure out how to make vinyl that really looks like wood, and that'll be the end of wood."

3:37 A corner of a large booth devoted to flooring. A bare-chested mannequin, holding a hobbyhorse and wearing very little besides a cowboy hat, vest, and chaps all made out of flooring material, with criss-crossed weld-rod laces. A young sales rep is asking a customer: "Did you hear about the fashion show? All these companies had to make outfits out of whatever material they sell." He points at the kinky cowboy costume. "I actually had to *model* that thing. Now I'm trying really hard just to forget all about it."

He points at the kinky cowboy costume. "I actually had to *model* that thing. Now I'm trying really hard just to forget all about it."

3:55 A customer pauses by a booth displaying lightning rods, and points to the jewel-tone glass globes halfway up. "Do these have a function?"

The rep shrugs. "Just decorative."

"But can you see them from the ground?"

"Not really." The rep smiles. "I guess the only people who'd notice them are people like us, who are nuts about lightning rods."

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4:08 A rep is explaining the benefits of a wheeled "evacuation chair" that has treads like a tank, "for emergency evacuation of immobile personnel." The chair can be pushed down stairs; the weight of the person sitting in it presses the treads onto the steps, preventing the chair from accelerating or slipping. The booth is equipped with a short flight of stairs, for demonstration purposes. "Want to take me down? I'll show you how easy it is." The rep sits in the chair and beckons from the top of the stairs. "Come on. Take me down." The customer, reluctant and nervous, climbs up and complies; the rep smiles all the way down, coaching and murmuring encouragement.

4:15 In the adjoining booth, which is devoted to wooden chairs, the rep has overturned one of the chairs and is jumping up and down on its legs to show how strong they are. The table in front of him is covered with literature showing a man jumping up and down on the legs of an identical overturned chair.

4:33 Overheard in the ladies' room, another cell phone conversation. "Wait — *who* did he bring home from school?"

5:04 A booth that is largely occupied by a race car. Is the vehicle meant to demonstrate some feature or quality of the product? The rep smiles, at once proud and sheepish. "Uh, not really. It's just our race car. Well, actually, we share it with another company. They race it some of the time, and then other times we do. See? There are both of our logos on the trunk."

5:32 A hand-lettered sign: "UPS LOST OUR BOOTH!! BUT STOP ANYWAY... WE'VE GOT LOTS TO SHOW." The display is indeed extremely sparse: a few photographs of cornices and gutters, and a pile of literature. The sign is garnering a lot of sympathetic attention. One of the two reps is telling a customer, "Yes, it's still lost. We don't know if it'll ever show up."

"But," his colleague adds, grinning, "it doesn't seem to have hurt us. We got the same number of leads as last year."

6:02 Three reps, from different booths, are playing catch across the aisle with a small orange ball, logoed with the name of a fourth manufacturer.

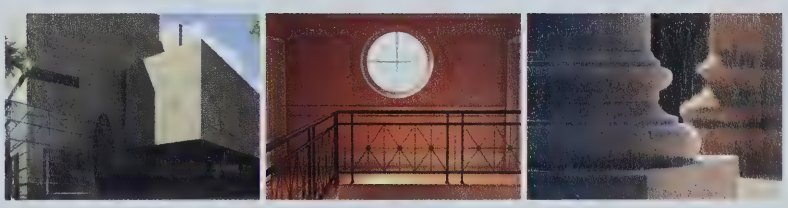
6:15 A man trudging by with a literature-filled tote bag pauses to rest for a minute in front of a booth.

The rep addresses him, all bright energy. "Are you familiar with us?"

The man looks back with a weariness bordering on hostility. "Never heard of you."

6:35 Another window manufacturer's booth. Another display of a shattered-but-still-intact window. Another salesman is saying to another prospect, "See, what they do is, they shoot a two-by-four out of a cannon...." ■

Joan Wickersham is a writer in Cambridge, Massachusetts.



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Artizan Design Centre Gives Architects, Designers, and Builders Easier Access to Innovative Canadian Wood Products

It is a tale of two cities: the Lawrence, Massachusetts address at 29 South Canal Street remains the same, but the renovation of this industrial complex is helping international businesses to grow and a city to rejuvenate itself.

Architectural rendering by Cyber Development

An architectural rendering of the South Canal International Business Center and home to Artizan Design Centre.

"Artizan Design Centre brings together under one roof a high quality collection of the Wood Products Group of Canada members' most innovative products,"

In the 1890s, the brick mill at the South Canal was part of the region's booming textile manufacturing industry. Today, thanks to the entrepreneurial efforts of Andover attorney and developer Arthur J. McCabe and a loan from MassDevelopment, the 80,000 square foot Lawrence South Canal International Business Center is undergoing a renaissance to become a destination trade center and incubator space for international companies interested in opening manufacturing or sales facilities in the United States.

For the Wood Products Group of Canada, the South Canal International Business Center offered the perfect gateway for its member companies to better serve their customers in the New England market. The Group recognized the potential of the Lawrence community's rebirth and the opportunity to be part of the revitalization of the city's many 19th century buildings. They also appreciated the warm reception they received from local civic and business leaders to their proposed venture.

In March 2006, the Wood Products Group of Canada officially opened its new Artizan Design Centre, a showcase of innovative millwork and building products for residential and light commercial applications. The Artizan Design Centre was made possible by financial support from the province of New Brunswick and the Canadian federal government.

"Artizan Design Centre brings together under one roof a high quality collection of the Wood Products Group of Canada members' most innovative products," said John DiCesare, the Wood Products Group of Canada's Vice President of U.S. Operations.

"Architects, designers, and builders in New England will have greater selection and faster access to high-end millwork and manufactured wood products from the Atlantic Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland/Labrador, and Prince Edward Island," explained DiCesare.

"This region is internationally known for the natural beauty of native woods – such as maple, white and yellow birch, cedar, and pine – and for its culture of fine wood craftsmanship and sophisticated manufacturing techniques."

Sixteen Canadian companies have already signed on to showcase the craftsmanship of their wood wares – including timber frames, stairways and newels, cabinetry and millwork, flooring, and a variety of structural and exterior products. He noted specific new product innovations such as flooring made from end grain cuts of wood, and from timbers salvaged from river bottoms or harvested from old buildings. Additionally, European, traditional, and contemporary styles in cabinetry and millwork will be featured.

South Canal International Business Center developer McCabe was so taken with the products manufactured by Wood Products Group of Canada companies that he incorporated many of them into the renovation of the facility.

"When you enter the building, you'll see a large timber frame structure, and throughout the space are different styles of hardwood floors all manufactured by Atlantic Canadian companies featured at the Artizan Design Centre," noted McCabe.

To make the specification and purchase process easier for architects, designers, and contractors, Artizan Design Centre will offer consulting services and facilitate orders with member companies who exhibit in the space. Additionally, U.S. companies may be able to take advantage of an export buyer-financing program sponsored by the Canadian government.

"The Artizan concept," explains DiCesare, "is to showcase new ideas and create a community of experts who are focused on serving the needs of area architects, designers and builders in the most effective ways possible. Artizan Design Centre is a 'one-stop-shop' designed to make doing business internationally as simple and convenient as possible for everyone."

Artizan Design Centre features products in the following categories:

- Cabinetry, Moulding, & Specialty Millwork
- Flooring
- Windows & Doors
- Stairways & Railings
- Kitchens & Baths
- Heirloom-Quality Furniture
- Panelized Building Systems
- Timber Frame Structures
- Exterior Siding & Cedar Shingles
- Outdoor Building Products
- Log Homes

artizan DESIGN CENTRE

Artizan Design Centre at 29 South Canal Street, Lawrence, MA 01843 is open weekdays from 9:00 a.m to 5:00 p.m. To make an appointment, call 1.877.655.0841, or visit us at Residential Design Boston, booth number 818.

info@artizandesigncentre.com
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Living Room

New attitudes about housing for older people are expanding choices for everyone

Participants

Faith Baum AIA, IIDA is the principal of Faith Baum Architects in Lexington, Massachusetts, and teaches at Rhode Island School of Design.

Michael J. Crosbie, PhD, RA is an architect with Steven Winter Associates in Norwalk, Connecticut. The editor of *Faith & Form* magazine, he is the author of several books and is the editor of *Design for Aging Review*, published by the American Institute of Architects.

Tony Green is the managing partner of The Pinehills, an open-space, master-planned community on 3,200 acres in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

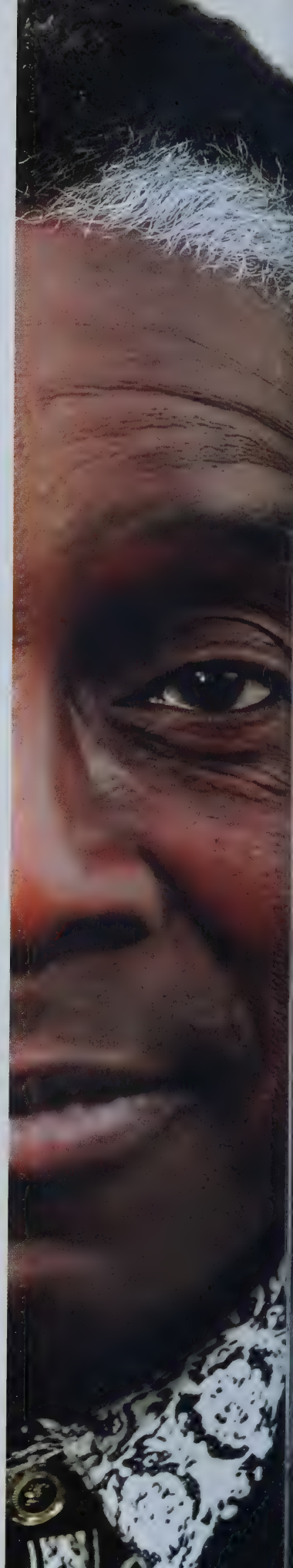
David Luberoff is the executive director of the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston at Harvard University.

Elizabeth Padjen FAIA is editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

Alfred Wojciechowski AIA is a principal of CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares in Boston and a former chair of the Boston Society of Architects Housing Committee.

Elizabeth Padjen: In the past, conversations about housing for older people might have touched on public housing projects, retirement communities like Sun City, Arizona, and the entire state of Florida. Those conversations tended to view "elderly housing" as isolated, single-purpose projects. Now there seems to be growing interest in design for an aging population, and with it, a new way of thinking seems to be emerging. I believe that we are seeing a much more integrated approach to designing housing for older people — housing that offers more choices, that is more firmly rooted in its community. The parameters of the discussion seem to have changed: some people are beginning to think across generational demarcations, finding ways to make housing for the old also work as housing for the young.

Michael Crosbie: I share your perception that this suddenly has become much more of an issue; I don't know if that's because I'm getting close to living in one of those places myself, or if it's simply that the "pig in the python" that is the baby-boom generation is moving farther on toward the tail. But in addition to simple



PHOTOS, LEFT TO RIGHT: DONN THOMPSON, RUBBERBALL, SOREN HALD, AMOS MORGAN, CHABRUKEN. (ALL FROM GETTY IMAGES.)

"Sustainability has been the hot topic in architecture over the past 10 years, but I think that over the next 10 years, design with a new perspective on aging is going to take its place as an issue." — Michael Crosbie

demographics, I think we're seeing a greater appreciation of good design coupled with a new interest in creating communities and neighborhoods that work. Warehousing people doesn't create community; mixing generations does.

Sustainability has been the hot topic in architecture over the past 10 years, but I think that over the next 10 years, design with a new perspective on aging is going to take its place as an issue. Housing is only part of the issue; we're going to see this discussion occurring in other areas, too, such as the workplace and product design.

Alfred Wojciechowski: My sense is that we are more aware of this phenomenon now because the marketplace itself is widening, and older people of means are starting to demand more choices. European senior housing, which is government-driven and has a strong social-engineering component, is different from our market-driven model. The assisted-living movement here, which has really started to take hold, is an example; it's driven by consumer demand. The broad spectrum of available housing types offers substantially more options than even 15 years ago.

Faith Baum: The driving force behind this, the baby-boomer generation, has a unique personality that is also influencing design attitudes. When the boomers were in graduate school, social engineering through architecture was the big thing. The new focus on design for aging is another kind of social evolution. And it takes on that boomer personality — they want community by design; not just the artifact, but the community.

David Luberoff: I think there are four trends that contribute to the new interest in aging. First, people are living longer and they're healthier longer. In the past, you retired at 65, in part because you probably couldn't do much else. Now, a lot of people are hitting their 80s before they start to need assistance. It's a fundamentally different way of looking at lifespans and lifecycle.

Second, the people who are now in their 80s are probably the first generation of affluent elderly. Before Social Security, the elderly were typically poor. Now, in many cases, the equity that many of the baby boomers' parents are sitting on or have recently passed on is substantial. So these are folks who have the financial ability to exercise some choices.

The third point is this idea that you can actually have fun in your 60s. Who would have thought Mick Jagger would still be singing?

The last trend, which in part responds to the market but in part shapes it, is that there are some perverse incentives that make local communities think that allowing age-restricted housing, as opposed to family housing, is a really good thing. The cities and towns think they're going to get property tax revenue without the expense of schools, because the elderly don't have kids. But anecdotal data suggest that when you build age-restricted housing, you relocate the empty-nesters within the community and their houses are bought by new families who increase the school population.

Tony Green: The change we're seeing in terms of new housing choices is not age-related. I think it's lifestyle-related. Taking care of the lawn is not all it's cracked up to be. Whether you're 22 years old or 62 years old, cutting the lawn isn't that much fun. Housing choices are expanding because the market is driven by lots of people, not just baby boomers, who want lifestyle choices.

Faith Baum: Lifestyle choices are often based on a need or desire for certain services. A lot of my older clients want to stay in their homes as long as they can. That's an individual decision, but it requires a lot of changes in public policy, such as public transportation and other kinds of services that we never imagined. But I see this happening in an even broader context, one that addresses the needs of a range of people. The elderly widow who wants to stay in the home where she's lived for 20 years might need a way to get to the grocery store — as will the mother who's just had twins. They might both worry about isolation and the cost of gasoline. New solutions will go hand in hand with our changing attitudes toward sustainability and the environment. And that will only make life better for everyone.

David Luberoff: Serving the market you just described — the widow and the mother of twins — implies a completely different version of public transit — not a rail line, but something more like a very dense network of jitney buses. Transit advocates tend to think in terms of extending the rail lines everywhere, and that's not going to help the people you just described solve their very real problems.

Alfred Wojciechowski: I would propose another scenario: you don't go to get services, the services come to you. It's basically the Peapod model, which offers home delivery of groceries based on the

even older model of the milkman and the doctor coming to your door. The lack of density of most single-family-house developments today means you can never have enough buses. But if I have a housekeeper, a guy who cuts the lawn, and even a vet who makes housecalls, I can live comfortably in my single-family home, whether I'm 30 years old or 80. Having a wealth of services coming to you allows individuals to maintain the very un-dense lifestyle of the single-family home.

Tony Green: One of the things we learned from our research prior to starting Pinehills was that in many cases people felt that their existing houses just didn't work anymore in terms of what was important to them. For example, what was most important to one couple was that their three grown daughters, all with husbands and children, come back for dinner every Sunday night. But they had to have dinner in the basement, separate from the kitchen upstairs, because there was no other room in the house big enough to hold everyone. Their house didn't work for them.

It's important to understand who's who. In the average Massachusetts town, about 25 percent of the houses contribute 100 percent of the schoolchildren. There's a range, obviously, but generally speaking, that means that 75 percent of the housing stock is not occupied by families with kids. So there's a whole market out there that might not be served by existing housing types. In Massachusetts, we have the oldest housing stock in the country by far. Our houses have the highest percentage of master bedrooms on the second floor. Put in other terms, we have a limited supply of houses that could be more user-friendly, and not necessarily just for older people. Why go up the stairs to sleep if you don't need to?

Elizabeth Padjen: What are some of the specific design elements in houses that people are asking for to accommodate aging?

Faith Baum: No matter what the age of my clients, the one thing they are all concerned about is resale value. So I rarely consider a solution that is specific to any one age group. But I'd say there is a pattern in terms of what commands attention. With my clients, it starts off with the kitchen as a focus of change; then the bedroom moves downstairs; then the bathroom is addressed. But I often wonder if that initial desire to change the kitchen is a result of a lifestyle change or product marketing — are the kitchen suppliers and manufacturers driving this new focus?

Michael Crosbie: There's a theory that the more nonessential something becomes, the more elaborate and decorated it becomes. We eat out or get takeout a lot more than we used to. We sit in the kitchen and watch The Food Channel instead of actually cooking something. But the kitchen is still an important social space for family and friends, just as it was, oddly enough, when our great-grandparents were growing up. In many older houses, the kitchen is the largest space in the entire house. Maybe what we're seeing is a resurgence of the kitchen as an important social space.

Alfred Wojciechowski: My firm is designing single-family houses in Shanghai for the early-30-something market, selling for $2 million to $3 million. The concept of the trophy kitchen exists there, too, in a somewhat different form. There, the trophy kitchen includes both a Chinese kitchen and a Western kitchen. The Chinese kitchen is the working kitchen, where the cook plucks and prepares the chicken so the owners can cook it in the Western kitchen for their guests. The Western kitchen provides a ceremonial element.

Faith Baum: I teach a course on universal design; universal design, as you probably know, grew out of the accessibility movement with the recognition that design that works for one group is frequently helpful to everyone. The common example is the wheelchair ramp that works for mothers with baby strollers. It's especially interesting to look at universal design concepts across cultures. In one class, I taught students from Nepal, Thailand, Pakistan, China, even New Jersey. I assigned a user/function analysis of a kitchen, for which they examined the human-factor requirements of a family member in their own home kitchen. The students were required to propose modifications based on universal design concepts. I was amazed that all the kitchens they studied looked the same. Moreover, the nature of the cooking and the food in no way matched the form of the kitchen. It was a universally cohesive set of kitchens, none of which apparently worked. That's why I ask: What's driving this? Is it marketing? Or are we designers shirking our responsibility of identifying what people really need? It's a big question, one that reaches far beyond kitchen design.

Elizabeth Padjen: I'm not sure that anyone is looking at housing models in those terms. What do different cultural or ethnic groups want or need that they can't find in the real estate market?

David Luberoff: One of the things we know about this region is that we have large numbers of immigrants at all levels of the socioeconomic spectrum; some of

"The elderly widow who wants to stay in the home where she's lived for 20 years might need a way to get to the grocery store — as will the mother who's just had twins." — Faith Baum

"The lifestyle desires of younger couples who don't have kids are not very different from those of an empty-nester." — Tony Green

them live in multigenerational households. Many are people who have some disposable income, so they have choices.

Elizabeth Padjen: It would seem to be an opportunity for some clever entrepreneurial developer to build housing that would address different cultural needs, particularly the needs of multigenerational families who expect to live together over a long period of time. On the other hand, the history of many city neighborhoods is the history of one ethnic group supplanting another, a sequence that extends over centuries. Perhaps people are more adaptable than we think.

Michael Crosbie: And yet, if you're designing a new environment, it is useful to understand the social and cultural traditions of the people you're designing for. One example, in Ireland, is a new residential community for seniors. One of the master strokes of the design was that it includes a pub. In Ireland, the pub is the social hub of a community. It's become the most popular feature of this development. When you're designing for a group of people who have made the decision to leave their single-family homes and move into a group situation, it's especially important to determine the social patterns of the community and find a way to allow those same interactions to continue.

Another approach to creating places for seniors involves renovating older structures in town centers to allow older folks to stay in a community environment, instead of moving to a more isolated suburban setting, which is where you usually find assisted-living facilities. They then have access to shopping, services, and activities within walking distance.

Alfred Wojciechowski: It's easy to forget that even in this country, much of our senior housing was traditionally built for specific ethnic or religious groups. I worked on the Swedish Home in Newton, which has been around for 80 or 90 years — our renovation actually amplified its cultural ties, and it's been renamed The Scandinavian Living Center. We added a Scandinavian lending library, a Nordic hall, a sauna, even a *stuga* — a traditional little cottage, which the residents use as a café. When I was a kid, my friends and I used to play on the big lawn next to "the Polish home." The elders would sit on the chairs and watch the kids play flag football. Inside they had the Polish Club, basically a beer pub. It was a wonderful place of community not just for the residents but for visitors as well, because it was a neutral environment. In that kind of environment, no one is confronted by age; you're just sitting there with everyone else, old and young, having a beverage, laughing, exchanging anecdotes — it's a place of gathering.

Tony Green: That's what all the success stories have in common. There's some community-oriented place of gathering, whether it's a pub or a post office or a coffee shop or a café.

Faith Baum: Culture is often also expressed in apparently small ways, in small objects, even through industrial design, as in a rice cooker in the kitchen. I have Thai clients living in a Boston suburb; integrated into their two-story suburban central-hall colonial is a Buddhist shrine at the top of the staircase. I'm interested in that kind of adaptability in building types: modifying the house to respond to the demands of each generation and each change in culture — recycling the house. That is one aspect of universal design.

Elizabeth Padjen: With the exception of some of the nonprofit housing that Alfred mentioned, we have been talking mostly about aging rich people. What are the opportunities for people of lesser means? Compared to the abundance of elderly housing projects in the '60s and '70s, including the wave of school conversions, we are not seeing much in terms of publicly assisted elderly housing.

David Luberoff: There's basically no public funding for new subsidized housing, period. Instead, almost all of the new "affordable" housing in greater Boston is in 40B projects. In markets where prices rise, supply usually increases. But in this region, even with the massive run-up in housing prices in the last 15 years, we are building much less new housing than we did in either the 1960s or the 1980s.

Alfred Wojciechowski: On the government side, though, you still have financing mechanisms that bring down mortgage rates. MassHousing has been playing a positive role in this, and there have always been finance people who are very good at pulling together the alphabet soup. But my sense is that there is also another layer of people now, who really are interested in doing well by society. They often work through nonprofits; they make a salary, but they're driven by the mission of doing something really well and helping society as a whole. We're seeing more people working in the intersections between private entities, private nonprofits, and the public housing authorities.

David Luberoff: One way in which government provides money for housing is through low-income housing tax credits; most of the current projects today involve people selling the tax credits. The money explicitly earmarked for affordable housing has pretty well disappeared. We're also learning about other ways government influences the cost of housing, not always for the better. There's a pretty strong

argument that the whole system of land-use regulation in this region is in large measure the reason why housing is so expensive here. The new Rappaport/Pioneer study on housing regulation and housing prices shows that as you increase minimum lot size by about an acre — and generally speaking, towns have been increasing minimum lot sizes — the share of homes that meet standard definitions of affordability drops by about 8-to-20 percent. [The full study is online at www.ksg.harvard.edu/rappaport/research/housingregs.htm.]

Tony Green: Do you know what the average percentage of the market is that can afford the average house in our state right now?

David Luberoff: According to the Boston Foundation's most recent "Greater Boston Housing Report Card," in only 27 of the region's 161 cities and towns can median-income residents afford to buy median-priced houses in their community. It's a stunning number, and it's having significant consequences for the region. The single biggest obstacle facing our hospitals and universities — two important economic engines in this region — is the cost of housing. It's very difficult to recruit and retain faculty and staff.

Elizabeth Padjen: Are any of you seeing evidence of real innovation in terms of new housing models?

Michael Crosbie: Co-housing, which has been popular in the Netherlands for many years, has made some inroads in this country, but not many. Co-housing provides living space for a number of families, where they share certain aspects of the house, like a big kitchen or dining room. The families have their own private spaces — bedrooms and some living areas.

David Luberoff: There are at least three co-housing projects in Massachusetts that I know of. One is New View in Acton, one is in Amherst, and one is in Cambridge. The Acton project has townhouses and detached houses on relatively small lots; the Amherst project has detached houses on small lots. Cambridge is a multiunit building. I believe they each have 20 or 30 families.

Faith Baum: What's the income bracket of the people who live there?

David Luberoff: Acton and Amherst generally are middle to upper-middle income. I think the Acton project had an inclusionary zoning requirement, so there might be one or two affordable units. Co-housing creates very interesting issues within the community, because it is based on a communal, co-op governance. It tends to appeal to folks who are more affluent, who see it as a lifestyle choice.

The larger trend that I think is coming to Massachusetts from other parts of the country is the rise of private communities. A huge amount of the new housing in this country is being built in the Southwest, and much of it is in totally private communities, where you are governed by a homeowners' association. They typically still receive certain municipal services — police, fire, education, waste disposal, utilities — but the association essentially replaces town government.

Tony Green: Except for public safety, fire, police, and schools, that's similar to how we do it at Pinehills. Everything's private, even our utilities. There aren't many places in this state where that's been approved. At Pinehills, we provide all of our own water, have our own tertiary wastewater treatment plant, which recycles much of it for golf irrigation and returns water to the ground in potable condition. We provide our own cable television and Internet access. All of our roads and trails are privately maintained and plowed. The town of Plymouth, where we are located, does not have trash pickup, but we do. There are many different possible management models, but the one we chose was to have a master landowners' association, to which every homeowner pays a monthly fee that takes care of the shared facilities. Within the community, there are neighborhood subdistricts. We wanted to create lots of different choices, so we have a wide range of housing types and prices: some homes are under $400,000, others go up to $10 million. Yet they are all oriented toward a similar lifestyle.

Michael Crosbie: Do you think the appeal of this kind of community is generationally based?

Tony Green: No. I think it's based on shared lifestyle. The lifestyle desires of younger couples who don't have kids are not very different from those of an empty-nester. In every neighborhood in our community, the district association must at a minimum plow your driveway, shovel your front walk, and take out your trash. All these things are taken care of, whether you're younger or older. We appeal to buyers who want that lifestyle and level of service. The average age in our community at this point is 50 — so if we were deed-restricted by age, which you can do in Massachusetts, we would have lost more than half our buyers. In fact, only two of our neighborhoods are deed-restricted.

Elizabeth Padjen: And do you imagine that you will be providing services like shuttle buses and delivery services to those people?

"The single biggest obstacle facing our hospitals and universities — two important economic engines in this region — is the cost of housing. It's very difficult to recruit and retain faculty and staff." — David Luberoff

Tony Green: I think the marketplace will invent all sorts of things, some of which we've provided, some of which are already happening independently. The guy who runs the café does a lot of catering. Going to the post office, where everyone picks up their mail, fosters chance social encounters that contribute to a sense of community; some people use the walk for exercise. I could see the US Post Office, which we run, evolving into a concierge-like business. The wine and spirits shop delivers. These things grow organically as people make choices.

Elizabeth Padjen: We're already seeing the private sector picking up on some of these services; it's happening all around us. One example is Beacon Hill Village, a nonprofit in Boston. A number of people living on Beacon Hill who didn't want to move as they got older realized that, if they pooled their resources, they could provide services that would allow them to continue to live in their homes. For an annual membership fee, people of varying means can find the help they need within the context of a supportive community.

Michael Crosbie: In some ways, these elements of community were already part of the places where our parents and grandparents grew up. As we've become more dispersed and our lifestyles have become more diverse, we depend upon the private sector to provide that sense of community.

David Luberoff: This is part of a very broad phenomenon. Think about the suburbs. My hunch is that kids are increasingly involved in activities provided by the private and nonprofit sectors, outside of the public sector and what the schools provide. The combination of more people working at home and more retirees turns the local Starbucks into a community center. We are constantly creating new forms of community to replace the old ones we're losing.

Faith Baum: The home-office phenomenon is more significant than we realize. It changes the way we work, but it will also change the way we age. Retirement becomes a fuzzier concept.

Tony Green: Not only are people working much longer, but they are also making different decisions at different points in their lives. It used to be that you thought about the possibility of moving when you retired. But now people are not retiring, so the time to think about that move has changed to when the last kid moves out of the house. And that's a very different age. My roommate from college was an empty-nester when he was 39 years old.

David Luberoff: We're seeing all kinds of data reflecting mobility. I recently looked at census data for the town of Arlington, which is considered a fairly stable community. The last census asked people if they were living in the same house as

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they were five years earlier. And 40 percent of the people had been living somewhere else five years earlier, which is only slightly less than the same figure for both the Boston metro area and the state as a whole.

Elizabeth Padjen: The very idea of selling the family house and moving into a retirement house has evolved away from the idea that a house would be passed from generation to generation. The Pickering House in Salem was until recently occupied by 10 successive generations of one family. Now, when you hear that the average American moves every seven years, two or three successive generations seem remarkable. People are funding retirement by cashing out the equity they've built up in their houses. That's fine — but it's not a strategy that will work for lower-income people or even for a lot of middle-income people.

Faith Baum: And now we're seeing the trend of people who retired to Florida or the South moving back home because they want or need to be near their kids and grandchildren.

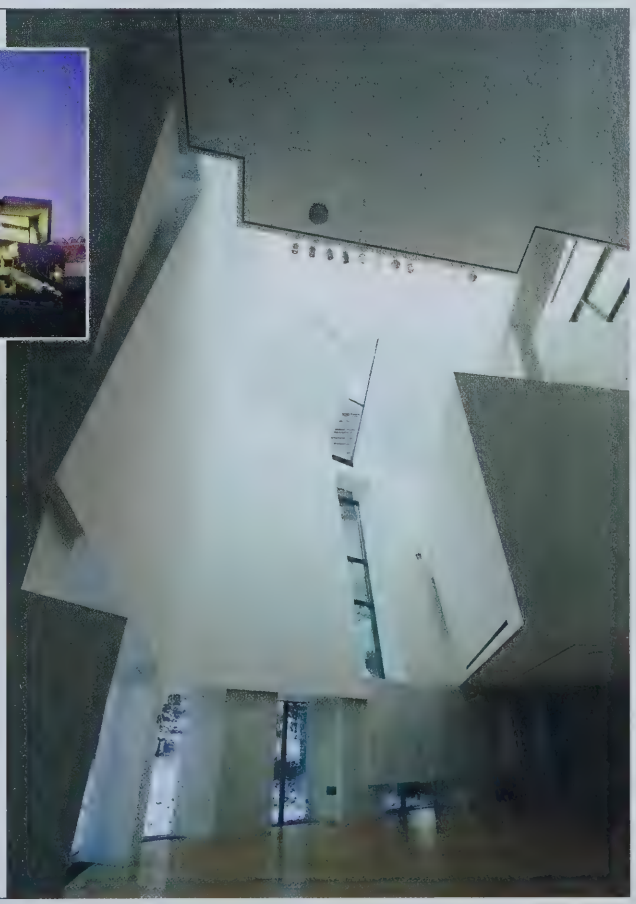
Tony Green: Children are an incredibly organizing force in life; when they've moved on, that level of organization leaves with it. You can find that you've ended up in a place that is not as fulfilling as you'd hoped. People strive to find a place where they will meet people. That can happen in a new neighborhood. By definition everybody is new, and so people tend to be a little bit more open to new interactions.

Alfred Wojciechowski: My sense is that moving from job to job, city to city, became common with the "dot com" generation. Now people think that a two- or three-year stint at a company is a substantial period of time. That sense of mobility affects the housing market.

Elizabeth Padjen: I think you're right. It's a different way of looking at life: instead of thinking that one size fits all aspects of your life, people look for whatever suits them best at this moment in their lives. And that might require a different job, a different city, a different house, a different spouse. That's a fundamental change in attitude.

Alfred Wojciechowski: It *is* a fundamental change. You can see it in the workplace — people in their 20s have a different notion of work and how it fits their lives. They're leaving at five o'clock instead of seven o'clock, because they have a commitment to some other aspect of their lives. You see it in slightly different ways with the 30-somethings, who have logged 10 to 15 years in the workplace. They've moved around. They've owned, not just rented, several homes. A home is a stepping stone, maybe an investment, certainly a pleasant place to park yourself for a few years. It's a different dynamic, and it will be fascinating to see how it plays out. ■

Photography: Peter Vanderwarker



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Solving for X

Calculating idealism among young architects

By Thomas de Monchaux

"We were going back and forth," the student was saying over the whir of the digital projector, which showed an array of glowing cubical rooms floating over a dark corner of a distant borough, "between being cynical and being optimistic." The setting was a recent final review for a mandatory housing design studio. With its faint whiff of virtue (the site was a dilapidated block in a dispossessed neighborhood), and of tedium (496 identical units, all to ADA-standards), housing occupies a distinctive place in design curricula otherwise often concerned with the spectacular and hermetic.

These exact categories, cynicism and optimism, seem to be the standard tropes for describing the sensibilities of successive generations, ever since *zeit* met *geist*. Generation X, that famous demographic either discovered or invented, but incontrovertibly defined, in the novel of that title by writer-turned-occasional-industrial-designer Douglas Coupland, is distinguished by a late-Cold-War nihilism and malaise. "Back in the late 1970s, when I was 15 years old," he wrote, "I felt…a mood I have never really been able to shake completely, a mood of darkness and inevitability and fascination." The generation that follows, though, is a different story. As a recent Kellogg School of Management marketing study summarizes: "The rising millennial generation is bringing with it a backlash to tradition. In comparison to Generation X, which older generations looked upon as disillusioned, rebellious, and pessimistic, Generation Y-ers seem to embody the optimism and idealism that baby boomers themselves held dear."

The story is familiar: the Greatest Generation fights the Depression and World War II; the boomers invent rock-and-roll and *Doonesbury*; the Gen-Xers lapse into grungy slacker resistance; and the Gen-Yers bounce back. Technology and psychopharmacology figure in. So do 1968 and 1989. Even discounting the alarming abecedarian terminus implied by the lettering of those later generations, this ur-narrative is of course as specious as any cultural myth. Every generation is a moving target and protean in character, and the

Opposite: Dutch pavilion, Hannover Expo 2000, Hannover, Germany. Architect: MVRDV. The pavilion serves as a catalogue of some of the ideas and forms that influenced American design schools in the '90s.

temporal grain of cultural shifts is surely finer than the 20-year post-war pixel. Yet this story is one we seem to need in order to describe the short and convulsive century just passed. And like every good story, it's been a self-fulfilling prophecy. Underemployed pre-graduate students of the early 1990s could see Ethan Hawke, Winona Ryder, and their avatars in films like Ben Stiller's *Reality Bites*, Cameron Crowe's *Singles*, or Richard Linklater's *Slacker* and know how to live.

Movies, music, literature, fine arts, and other cultural products and artifacts can be easily interpreted to illuminate the demographic story. Architecture, however, has always been an awkward fit. This must be in part because architecture seems, thanks to its feudal social networks and vast body of required knowledge, to have ever been an old man's game. Ever since Philip Johnson infamously described Frank Lloyd Wright (who at the time had another 20 years and arguably his best work before him) as "the greatest architect of the 19th century," architects have tended to hit their productive if not theoretical peak well after middle age. Every famous architect is 10 or 20 years older than one casually expects. Frank Gehry is 77 this year. Zaha Hadid is 58. *Enfant terrible* Thom Mayne is 62. As is Rem Koolhaas.

Both X-ers and Dutch designers nursed a loving hatred for marginal and placeless environments — what Koolhaas would later term "junkspace" was in many ways already the essential X-er habitat.

Moreover, every big new building, given the necessary time between genesis, gestation, groundbreaking, and move-in date, is at least 10 years older than one thinks. Gehry's design for Bilbao, like the novel *Generation X*, was first published in 1991. God knows when the first draft, or something like it, was first drawn. So, there is a continual time lag between the material culture of architecture, and the ambient cultural sensibility into which it is constructed. The great paper architects of the '68-'89 period between the Age of Aquarius and the End of History are only now designing airports, cultural centers, cities. It's as if the films of the 1970s were only now being released.

What it would mean to live in a world where *Raging Bull* and *Taxi Driver* were the Oscar contenders of 2006 is an open question. Further suppressing this demographic time lag between architects and their moments of production is of course another timeless and timely generational story in which, instead of boomers and X-ers, Modernism and Postmodernism play the central roles. The notion that successive cultural, economic, or technological moments require and inspire their own formal languages in design is of course nothing new: one effect of these counter-demographic narratives of stylistic change (in which changeling architects like Wright and Johnson appear at every stage) has been to provide insulation between the micro-history of successive design formalisms on the one hand and the macro-history of successive generational sensibilities on the other.

That is, until the Dutch. Just as today's emerging professionals, the demographic heart of Generation X, were finding their way into architecture school in the mid-'90s, the observant, deft, clever, funny, and ruthlessly phlegmatic architecture of Koolhaas and his (generally younger) contemporaries was suddenly universal and irresistible. Visiting Dutch faculty energized American design schools. People developed an otherwise inexplicable interest in polders. A nation smaller than Wales became an architectural superpower. A narrow but deep formal vocabulary of tweaked boxes, courageous cantilevers, and ribboning surfaces became, and often remains, the new normal.

Demographically speaking, this phenomenon was the work of a postwar generation, the contemporaries of the American boomers: Koolhaas, born in 1944, is at the very oldest edge of the demographic; UN Studio principals Ben Van Berkel, born in 1957, and Caroline Bos, born in 1959, are at its heart; MVRDV partners Winy Maas, born 1959, Jacob Van Rijs, born 1964, and Nathalie de Vries, born 1965, are toward its trailing edge.

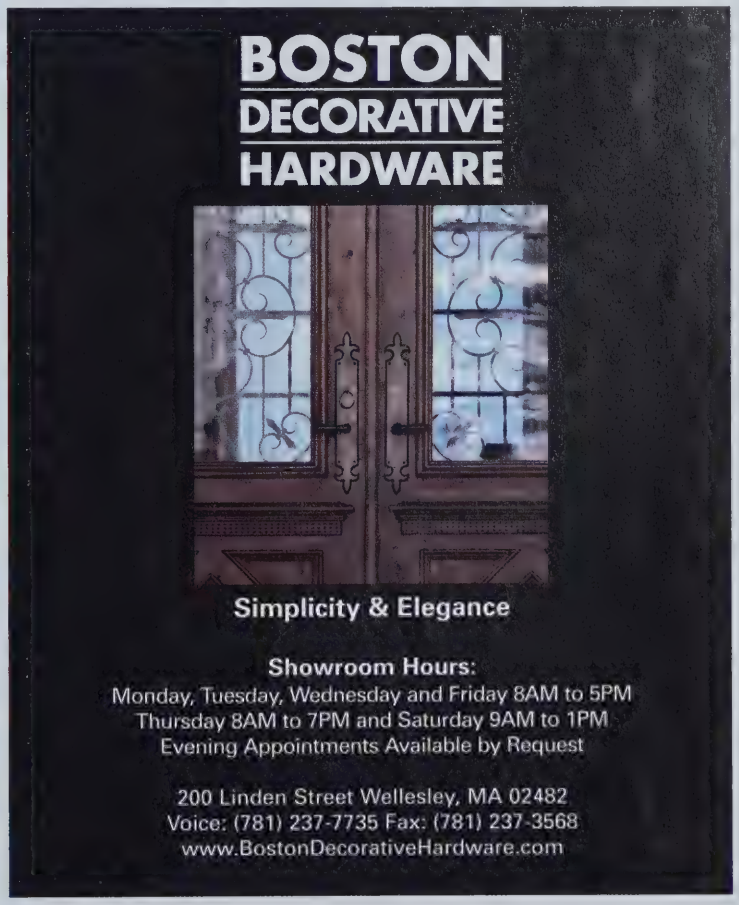
And yet, translated to an American context, these boomer-age folks became the generational equivalent of the world's coolest dads: confirming and amplifying in architecturally discursive terms the caustic X-er mordancy of their students and admirers. Who could resist a Big Mac of sliced and stacked landscapes (MVRDV's pavilion for Hannover Expo 2000), or a skyscraper for pigs (the same firm's 2001 proposal for agricultural development)? One thing they shared was a feeling for the sublime bluntness of statistics; the margins and appendices of Coupland's *Generation X* are as full of them as those of Koolhaas' epic monograph, *S, M, L, XL*. Within the American landscape, both X-ers and Dutch designers nursed a loving hatred for the marginal and placeless environments to be found in and around malls, strip malls, convenience stores, gas stations, big-box venues, parking lots, and especially the edges of airports — what Koolhaas would later term "junkspace" was in many ways already the essential X-er habitat.

Around the turn of the millennium, the astringent rhetoric and quietly comic affect of much Dutch work offered a tonic to the easy piety and priggishness, sentimentality and self-seriousness that could characterize the tone of late Modernist and Postmodernist stylists alike. During a late-'90s crit at one East Coast architecture school, a visiting Dutch starchitect memorably described one project, an earnest but under-realized homeless shelter, as "maybe a little too Anglo-Saxon." Although the Continental irony that was part of this astringency may have left some of its breeziness back in that distant era before politicized terror and incipient ecological catastrophe were the urgent news of the day, its complement in the X-er sensibility, Coupland's "mood of darkness and inevitability and fascination," remains potent. To be sure, a certain sharp-eyed realism mixed with a healthy dose of cynicism is potentially a great thing. Anyone who fell in love with Bogart in *Casablanca* knows that. Like Bogart in the final scenes of that film, much Dutch work, in its humanist fascination with the experience of the architectural subject and occupant, comes to be profoundly idealistic. And much of the pleasure of Dutch design is its liberation of Modernist formalism from the facile conflation of ethics and aesthetics with which it has been charged since the days of Gideon and Hitchcock.

So what's the problem? Perhaps it's that the student in that housing studio felt that it was even possible to imagine himself casually picking up and dropping optimistic and cynical positions, like a browsing shopper, rather than feeling the need to commit to either. This simultaneous assertion and disavowal of one's own work is a hedge, revealing the alarming way in which the complex cynicism of older European practitioners maps onto not only American X-er disengagement, but also onto the deep conservatism of students now in architecture school. Well-disguised as the quasi-ironical critical distancing from one's own practice that we see in Dutch design discourse, this uncommitted student work is perhaps more a calculated stance to, well, avoid sticking one's neck out. Studio teaching that often continues to resemble a form of hazing no doubt inspires this caution and conservatism: even in our enlightened era, many studios see cruelty mistaken for authority and rage for rigor. Many juries include a touch of ancient bloodsport. This archaic mode of instruction engenders a certain infantilism in its subjects: M.Arch graduate students generally in their late 20s and early 30s, who in the outside world are responsible voters, drinkers, and potential draftees, revert within this atmosphere to the casual juvenile cynicism that is the familiar armor for adolescence. Of course, this extension of adolescent thinking into nominal adulthood is, *pace* Coupland, an essential Generation X phenomenon. It may be that until architecture schools outgrow this mode of teaching, they may find themselves not only amplifying the X-ish tendencies of today's early 30-somethings, but also turning every generation of architects into a Generation X. At present, the problem is that with the addition of Dutch cleverness to the curriculum, a posture of mere calculating cynicism acquires an unearned gravitas and pedigree. The problem isn't genuine quasi-ironical critical distance. The problem is fake quasi-ironical critical distance engendered by fear.

Of course, to genuinely choose and commit to either optimistic or cynical practice would be, strangely, an act of idealism. Which reminds us that these two attitudes, cynicism and optimism, are not in fact opposites: cynicism opposes sincerity; optimism opposes pessimism. And that leaves us with a lively matrix of sincere optimism, cynical pessimism, optimistic idealism, idealistic pessimism, pessimistic idealism, and optimistic cynicism. It may be that the current war for hearts and minds, in design and elsewhere, is between idealistic pessimism on the one hand, and optimistic cynicism on the other. The latter vibe might be found in the Massive Change project, an optimistic manifesto for design's world-saving potential assembled by no less a figure than sometime Koolhaas collaborator, boomer graphic designer Bruce Mau. Describing the venture recently in a lecture at Parsons The New School for Design, he talked about being "in conflict with a mood that was going around that was incredibly negative and pessimistic and cynical." He added, "Today is probably the best time to be alive. If you wanted, I could give you the statistics." ■

Thomas de Monchaux is a writer and designer in New York City whose favorite bands are The Who and Summer Lawns.



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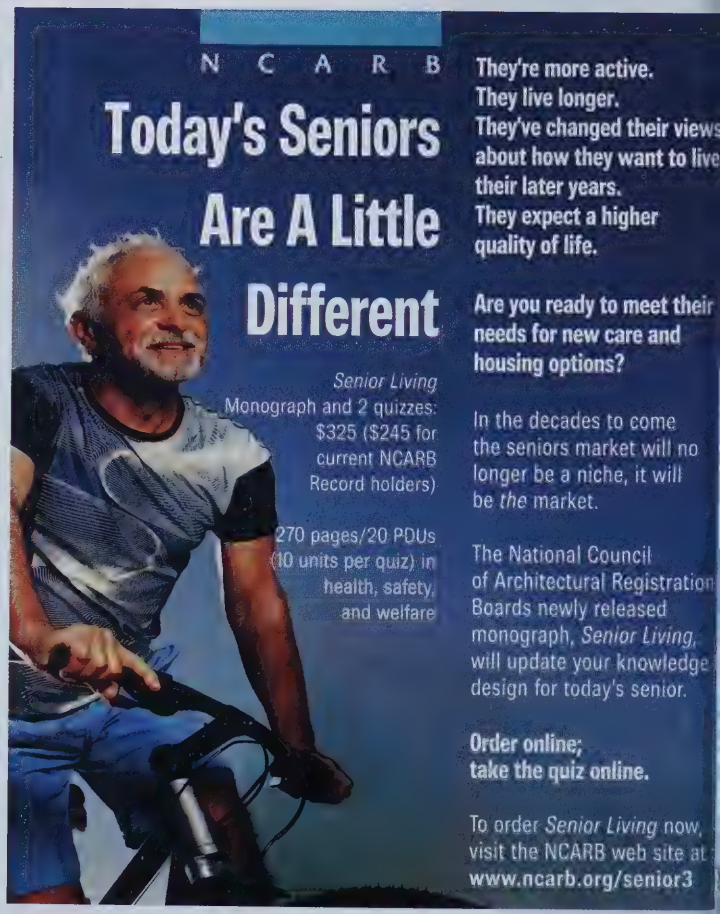


Where Will the Children Play?

The under-18s and over-55s are changing the face of Boston By Thomas M. Keane Jr.

The streets in Marlborough's Villages at Crane Meadow bear comforting names like Heatherwood and Whispering Brook. The setting is wooded. Neat, nearly identical faux-colonial houses give the illusion of single-family homes, although they are in fact connected together in clusters of five, each painted in muted, calming colors.

The stillness — despite nearby construction crews, who are busily building even more of the Villages — is striking, and in the silence one becomes aware of absences. No bicycles on lawns. No basketball hoops in driveways. Most notably, no children.

Children aren't allowed to live at the Villages. Nor are they allowed at Spring Meadows in Hanover, or in Quincy at the Highlands at Faxon Park, or in Dedham's Westbrook Crossing. Each of these developments is part of a new phenomenon in Massachusetts: age-restricted housing. Six years into the new millennium, they are the hottest development concept in the state.

Blame it on the boomers. Born between 1946 and 1964, and 78 million strong, the oldest of them is now 60, meaning the pot-smoking, mini-skirt-wearing, rules-breaking rebels of the generation that hoped it would die before it got old are getting ready to retire. And this generation is unlike any that came before it. The boomers are richer, they're living longer and, unlike their predecessors, they have no intention of fading away, gold watches in hand. They want to be energetic, engaged, and active (the term of art, in fact, is "active adults" — don't dare call them "seniors" or "retirees"). As they did in their youth, they intend to do things differently, to create a new world.

A world, apparently, that does not include children. The boomers aren't solely at fault. There are enablers here, namely the towns in which the developments are being built. As it turns out, even people with kids don't particularly like other people's kids. When developers go before town planning boards, seeking approvals for multi-unit housing, the ever-present concern expressed is the burden of new families. Kids make trouble, strain school budgets, and push property taxes up.

Age-restricted housing — typically, one resident must be 55 or over and none can be under 19 — poses none of those problems. The new residents, planners figure, will be just a bunch of nice, law-abiding old folks, cheerfully paying their taxes and asking little in return.

Before 2000, age-restricted developments in Massachusetts were rare. Now, according to a comprehensive report prepared in June 2005 by CHAPA (the Citizens Housing and Planning Association), age-restricted housing has surged while new family-friendly developments are almost non-existent. There are already at least 150 age-restricted projects in 93 towns, mostly in the eastern half of the state, with another 172 in planning.

It's easy to work oneself into a lather about all of this. Age-restricted housing seems misanthropic — or more precisely, misopedic. The developments appear to smack of the same outrageous bigotry that in years past excluded homebuyers on the basis of race or ethnicity. And the hostility of towns to kids makes one wonder, à la Cat Stevens, where, eventually, will the children play?

And then of course there's the insipid design of the developments themselves.

But wait. It's really not that bad. Yes, the design grates. Much of suburban residential architecture does. It's an issue, but upon reflection, one has seen worse.

More importantly, these new developments are not, in fact, gated communities. The development in Marlborough, for example, sits directly across the street from a nice neighborhood of large homes filled with families with kids. The same is true of Spring Meadows in Hanover, which is surrounded by middle-class housing. And Faxon Woods in Quincy, perched on a bluff overlooking the harbor, is part of a series of developments that includes everything from a nursing home to rentals catering to all.

In other words, it's not at all clear that the inhabitants are cloistering themselves away. True, kids aren't next door. But they are certainly close by.

Moreover, the occupants of the new age-restricted developments don't come from out of state. In most cases, they are empty-nesters who sell their homes and downsize to an easier, more maintenance-free lifestyle. And what happens to the homes that they sell? Families — with kids — move in. As Bonnie Heudorfer, author of the CHAPA study, notes, that phenomenon may explain an apparent paradox: communities that are encouraging age-restricted housing are frequently seeing their school-age populations rise. Ironically, permitting age-restrictions as a means of keeping kids out may simply encourage what is called "generational turnover" of the rest of the housing stock. Or, as David Luberoff, executive director of the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston, observes, "housing is housing — anything that adds to supply is good."

Still, the notion of living in a development that prohibits children is kind of creepy. One wonders about the mores of a generation that once preached openness and tolerance. Do the boomers really all buy into this?

Where People Live

The Young

10 communities with highest share of people under 18

Community	Total population	< 18	%
Medfield, Norfolk	12,273	4,122	33.6%
Hopkinton, Middlesex	13,346	4,417	33.1%
Groton, Middlesex	9,547	3,117	32.6%
Sudbury, Middlesex	16,841	5,476	32.5%
Boxford, Essex	7,921	2,551	32.2%
Southborough, Worcester	8,781	2,818	32.1%
Lawrence, Essex	72,043	23,019	32.0%
Sherborn, Middlesex	4,200	1,339	31.9%
Medway, Norfolk	12,448	3,965	31.9%
Westford, Middlesex	20,754	6,601	31.8%

10 communities with lowest share of people under 18

Community	Total population	< 18	%
Provincetown, Barnstable	3,431	273	8.0%
Amherst, Hampshire	34,874	4,476	12.8%
Chatham, Barnstable	6,625	879	13.3%
Cambridge, Middlesex	101,355	13,447	13.3%
Orleans, Barnstable	6,341	873	13.8%
Watertown, Middlesex	32,986	4,659	14.1%
Somerville, Middlesex	77,478	11,495	14.8%
Stockbridge, Berkshire	2,276	347	15.2%
Williamstown, Berkshire	8,424	1,293	15.3%
Waltham, Middlesex	59,226	9,173	15.5%

The Old

10 communities with highest share of people over 65

Community	Total population	> 65	%
Orleans, Barnstable	6,341	2,284	36.0%
Chatham, Barnstable	6,625	2,273	34.3%
Yarmouth, Barnstable	24,807	7,469	30.1%
Harwich, Barnstable	12,386	3,666	29.6%
Dennis, Barnstable	15,973	4,542	28.4%
Brewster, Barnstable	10,094	2,647	26.2%
Eastham, Barnstable	5,453	1,419	26.0%
Lenox, Berkshire	5,077	1,237	24.4%
Stockbridge, Berkshire	2,276	512	22.5%
Falmouth, Barnstable	32,660	7,338	22.5%

10 communities with lowest share of people over 65

Community	Total population	> 65	%
Amherst, Hampshire	34,874	2,314	6.6%
Tyngsborough, Middlesex	11,081	732	6.6%
Plympton, Plymouth	2,637	173	6.6%
Berkley, Bristol	5,749	373	6.5%
Mansfield, Bristol	22,414	1,426	6.4%
Bolton, Worcester	4,148	258	6.2%
Shutesbury, Franklin	1,810	104	5.7%
Norfolk, Norfolk	10,460	577	5.5%
Boxborough, Middlesex	4,868	230	4.7%
Wendell, Franklin	986	45	4.6%

The notion of living in a development that prohibits children is kind of creepy. One wonders about the mores of a generation that once preached openness and tolerance.

Heudorfer's sense is that many — perhaps one-third — do. Yet that means two-thirds resist, which in turn suggests that while age-restricted purchases may appeal to some as a matter of lifestyle, as a matter of good financial planning, they could be a mistake.

The problem with restricting the use of real estate is that, when it comes time to sell, the pool of potential buyers is limited. That's true even when the restrictions — such as those that prohibit pets — are relatively minor. It's vastly more significant when children or those under 55 are shut out. In fact, Heudorfer notes, there already are hints of problems; some of the newer developments have run into difficulties filling up.

The Workers

10 communities with highest share of people between 18 and 65

Community	Total population	18 to 65	%
Amherst, Hampshire	34,874	28,084	80.5%
Cambridge, Middlesex	101,355	78,626	77.6%
Somerville, Middlesex	77,478	57,884	74.7%
Provincetown, Barnstable	3,431	2,548	74.3%
Sunderland, Franklin	3,777	2,773	73.4%
Waltham, Middlesex	59,226	42,278	71.4%
Brookline, Norfolk	57,107	40,496	70.9%
Nantucket, Nantucket	9,520	6,692	70.3%
Boston, Suffolk	589,141	411,246	69.8%
Wendell, Franklin	986	688	69.8%

10 communities with lowest share of people between 18 and 65

Community	Total population	18 to 65	%
Holyoke, Hampden	39,838	21,897	55.0%
Lenox, Berkshire	5,077	2,782	54.8%
Dennis, Barnstable	15,973	8,734	54.7%
Lexington, Middlesex	30,355	16,585	54.6%
Westwood, Norfolk	14,117	7,489	53.0%
Brewster, Barnstable	10,094	5,341	52.9%
Yarmouth, Barnstable	24,807	13,068	52.7%
Chatham, Barnstable	6,625	3,473	52.4%
Harwich, Barnstable	12,386	6,457	52.1%
Orleans , Barnstable	6,341	3,184	50.2%

Contrast the age-restricted developments in the suburbs to what's happening in cities. Massachusetts law limits age-restricted developments to parcels of five acres or more, making them difficult to build in urban areas. Boston, for instance, has none. Yet the city has seen a surge in new construction over the last few years, especially in areas such as South Boston, the South End, the Waterfront, and the Theater District. A record-breaking 14,000 units are now either in planning or about to break ground.

For the most part, these units are condos, many of them full-service and designed — like the age-restricted developments in the suburbs — to appeal to those without children. That includes singles and young marrieds, of course, but the focus is on empty-nesters. "They want to enjoy themselves," says developer Tony Pangaro, whose firm, MDA Associates, built the Ritz Carlton Towers as well as One Charles. While he stresses that all types of buyers are welcomed, retirees dominate his market. After selling their homes in the suburbs, many are moving into town. Boston may have no *de jure* restrictions on age, but on a *de facto* basis, much of downtown is starting to resemble a retirement community. Some, observing this trend across the country, have started to call this phenomenon NORCs — naturally occurring retirement communities. So how does this all play out? Some speculation:

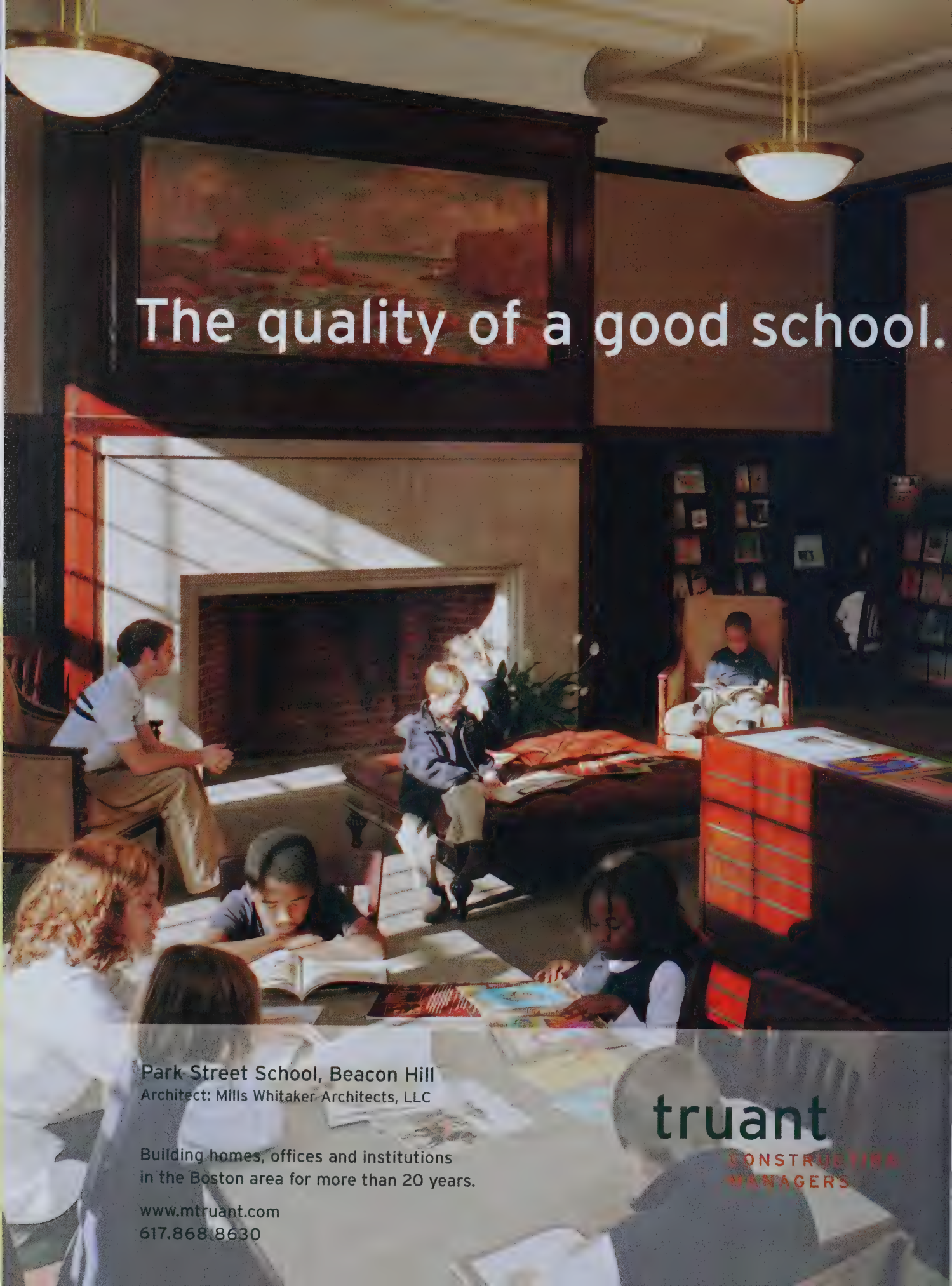
First, don't bet on the long-term viability of age-restricted housing. If two-thirds of boomers don't want them, then town planning boards will have to make concessions — or risk losing their aging residents altogether. And even those who don't mind the restrictions may be put off by the financial risks. On the other hand, do bet on new housing that appeals to the aging boomers — their numbers are too big to ignore.

Second, the rise of "active adult" housing in Massachusetts, whether age-restricted or not, suggests this new generation of retirees will be sticking around rather than moving to the likes of Florida or Arizona. Suburban communities, which traditionally have had little housing stock appropriate for retirees, could end up with far greater diversity — at least as measured by age — than ever before.

Third, although it is the suburbs that appear to be anti-family, it is in fact cities like Boston that are increasingly losing kids, especially those who are middle class. The reasons for that are many, but are exacerbated by the inward migration of empty-nesters, who are willing to pay more for less space than are growing families. Indeed, the resistance of town planning boards to family-oriented housing notwithstanding, it is in the suburbs, and not cities, where you'll find children — a truth that is becoming increasingly apparent not only in Boston but also in other cities around the country.

And finally: Prepare to be surprised. The boomers have a reputation as a volatile bunch. Their mass retirement marks the beginning of something entirely new and will affect the character and dynamics of our cities and towns in ways that are largely unpredictable. The times were a-changing back then. They still are. ■

Thomas M. Keane Jr. is a partner in a private equity fund and a former Boston city councilor. E-mail him at: tomkeane@tomkeane.com.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BRIDGING THE GAP

Photographs by

Elsa Dorfman

How do you build a community? For all the expertise of architects, planners, contractors, and developers, no one can provide the most essential ingredient: time. Only time can provide the shared experience and history that begin to define a community, and only time can foster the transmission of values that give a community its unique identity.

Boston is known nationally for the special character of its architectural community — its unusual degree of collegiality, activism, and commitment to the public good. These are values that have been transmitted from generation to generation in time-honored ways: through teaching, mentoring, and by example.

The idiosyncratic character of the architectural profession means that generational relationships in architecture probably stretch standard sociological definitions. Architects might not reach the height of their careers until their 60s and often continue to practice throughout their lives. Teachers and students frequently become later collaborators. Older architects know they can learn as much from their younger colleagues as they themselves can teach. The architectural community is small enough that individuals know one another personally or by only one or two degrees of separation. News of distinguished work travels fast.

The portraits on the following pages demonstrate the richness of the generational connections in Boston's architectural community. They were taken by Elsa Dorfman, an internationally recognized portrait photographer based in Cambridge, who works with a 200-pound, 20x24 Polaroid camera, one of only six in the world. Her work represents another kind of generational link, capturing moments in people's lives, revealing personalities, and preserving memories for a future time. It is no accident that her website (http://elsa.photo.net) is organized around the most recognized symbol of connections within the Boston community: the diagram of Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority subway lines, commonly called the T map.

— Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA

Tad and Tim. December 5, 2005.

Sharing a monthly bowl of chowder (and an occasional martini), Tad Stahl FAIA and Tim Love AIA also share the notion that architects can create their opportunities. Stahl, now an executive architect with Burt Hill, launched his practice in 1960 at the age of 30, when he convinced British investors of the value of a Boston site; the resulting State Street Bank Building was the first major downtown building in 40 years. Love founded Utile, Inc. at the age of 40, using design skills to investigate underdeveloped parcels and present them to developers.

Jane and Sally. January 5, 2006.
Bolman

Both Jane Weinzapfel FAIA and Sally Harkness FAIA have been pathfinders for the younger women architects who have followed them. A founding principal of The Architects Collaborative, Harkness has balanced practice, teaching, motherhood (seven children), a term as the 1985 BSA president, and books on sustainable design and accessibility. A founding principal of Leers Weinzapfel Associates and a 2002 Visiting Artist at the American Academy in Rome, Weinzapfel has similarly juggled practice, teaching, and motherhood. She is the 2006 president of the BSA.

John and Brandy. January 18, 2006.

John Wilson FAIA and Brandy Brooks share a commitment to the profession's ethical responsibility to the social fabric of the city. Wilson, a principal emeritus of Payette Associates, founded the BSA Task Force to End Homelessness; his work on social issues has been recognized by the AIA Whitney Young Award. Brooks is interim director of the Community Design Resource Center, an initiative supported by the BSA and the BAC.

Michael and Maryann. December 22, 2005.
Deborah

Landscape architect Michael Van Valkenburgh and architect Maryann Thompson AIA met as teacher and student at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, later becoming employer and employee. Their shared design sensibilities led to their current relationship as collaborators and friends — an example of the fluid nature of some generational relationships and the cross-disciplinary collaborations that are increasingly common in Boston.

HHR and Hugh. January 11, 2016.
Dolman

Hugh Shepley FAIA retired from Shepley Bulfinch Richardson & Abbott, the firm that was founded by his great-grandfather, H.H. Richardson. In addition to his vast influence on American architecture, Richardson's career marked the ascendancy of architecture as a profession. Shepley, a past president of the Boston Society of Architects, has carried professional standards into the 21st century; his generous encouragement of his colleagues exceeds even the generous girth of his esteemed relative.

Kyu Sung. John. Jinhee. January 18, 2006.
Deborah

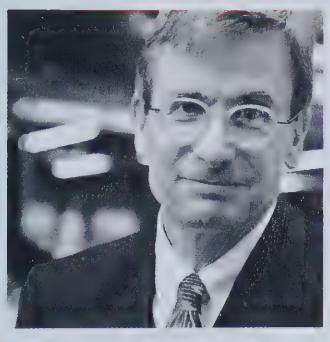
Kyu Sung Woo FAIA, John Hong AIA, and Jinhee Park share a relationship built on mentoring, friendship, shared experience, and family. Woo and Park are graduates of Seoul National University; all three are Harvard alumni. Woo once worked for Hong's father on urban design projects in Seoul. Woo is the principal of Kyu Sung Woo Architects. Park and Hong, who are married, are principals of Single Speed Design. Woo recently won the Asian Culture Complex competition in Gwangju, Korea; Single Speed Design won an honorable mention.

Kitchen gadgets for Zyliss, designed by IDEO.

The Time of Your Life

From baby strollers to cars, an international design firm finds that understanding the needs of one generation often leads to good design for all generations Gretchen Addi talks with Jeff Stein AIA

Gretchen Addi is a senior designer with IDEO in San Francisco, where she founded THRIVE, a research initiative to explore the needs of an aging population. A certified interior designer, she served as chair of the national AIA Interiors Committee in 1997, and teaches at the California College of Art.



Jeff Stein AIA is the director of the architecture program at the Boston Architectural Center and is the architecture critic for *Banker & Tradesman*.

Jeff Stein: You are a senior designer with IDEO, the largest product design firm in the world. The range of IDEO's work is extraordinary — from industrial and product design to graphics, environments, branding, even business strategy. That range, and the fact that you have offices around the world, puts you in the unusual situation of both observing and to some degree creating trends in the market. What are your perceptions of the way corporations are responding to lifespan issues and especially to the phenomenon of an aging population?

Gretchen Addi: Many of our clients have always gone with the flow in terms of targeting youth, and haven't really paid much attention to the aging population, other than its health and wellness needs. Over the past few years, IDEO has been looking closely at the boomer demographic and conducting our own research in order to understand it better, to better inform the work that we do for our clients, and also to get our clients to think about some things that they weren't necessarily thinking about.

Jeff Stein: And of course, the aging population actually controls the economy to a large extent.

Gretchen Addi: Yes. To reach that market, you have to get past the stereotype; you have to get into the mind set of the demographic.

Jeff Stein: Have you seen that change in thinking actually affect specific products?

Gretchen Addi: Definitely. I recently worked with a company that is looking at how some health and fitness products can target an older generation other than just gym rats. The focus of the company was on the product. After spending a lot of time with people in the age category it wanted to appeal to, we went back to the company and said, you know, it's really not about the product — the product is fine. It's really about the whole experience, because you're asking people to make a lifestyle change. The product is only part of the package. So we changed the approach. And that was a direct response to the boomer demographic. Boomers don't just need another gadget; they also need an understanding of the path to staying healthy that goes with it.

Jeff Stein: How far does IDEO go in terms of looking at the big picture and trying to influence change? For example, have you thought about our relationship to the environment and perhaps imagined ways to solve that dilemma?

Gretchen Addi: We have a focus around the whole idea of sustainability. We're thinking beyond the materials that are part of the manufacturing process and are looking at the whole lifecycle of a product. We're also actively trying to help companies that are developing knowledge in areas of sustainability to connect with some of our clients, who can then enable them to reach a larger market.

Jeff Stein: Is sustainability a more deeply felt issue in Europe than in the United States?

Gretchen Addi: No, I'd say it's just as strong here. And again, I think that's related to the boomer demographic. The boomers are now in a position of power. A lot of ideas about sustainability and ecology had their nascence when the boomers were in their late teens and early 20s and were politically active. Many people — and I'd say I'm one of them — who pushed sustainability for years and years are now in a position to push it into the mainstream. Boomers want the marketplace to respond to them. It's always responded to them. Even though they're older, they still want attention.

Jeff Stein: Your professional life started in interior design, and you worked with both architecture and interior design firms. I wonder if you see a connection between designing a space and designing a product. For instance, architecture is sometimes imagined to be a storytelling art. It's not just about shelter, it's about culture. I wonder if the notion that a product tells a story through its design is something that you have encountered.

Gretchen Addi: Inherent in all the things we design, buildings or products, is a desire to produce something that is needed or is valuable, in addition to being well-designed. Good design is reflective — of its environment, its culture, its users — and it's also intuitive, so people know how to use it or navigate through it. It shouldn't require signs and labels. People don't come to IDEO and ask us to do what industrial designers call a "skin job" — just make it look good. That's not what we're about. A design is meaningless if it doesn't respond to a strong value proposition. If its only value is beauty, then we haven't really achieved what we need to achieve.

Jeff Stein: Could you describe one product that represents that point of view?

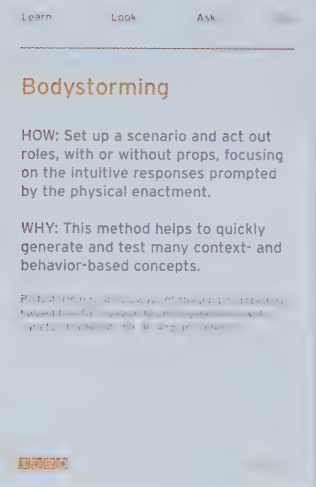
Gretchen Addi: We have been working very closely with Zyliss, a company that makes a whole series of kitchen tools. They wanted to design a new line of kitchen products, everything from utensils to salad spinners. We encouraged them to think across generations — products that both older and younger members of a family could use, because we understood that quite often children enjoy helping in the kitchen and parents welcome and encourage their participation.

At the other end of the spectrum were older people with limited ranges of motion and issues such as difficulty with holding the tools properly. So the human-factors people on the team went out and talked to a full range of people, from families with young children, to older people, to people of all ages with limitations in the use of their hands. Because my father, who lives with me, has some severe problems with his hands, a member of the team came to our house to learn how he had adapted his own tools. We often find that we get more information and inspiration by looking at the extremes. This gives the design team a lot of ideas about things that will work for everyone — what is sometimes called universal design.

Jeff Stein: So what's a Zyliss tool that you have in your kitchen now?

Gretchen Addi: We have the pizza cutter, a salad spinner, a potato peeler —

Jeff Stein: I have that potato peeler. Do you bring people into



Clockwise from opposite page: Insight stroller for Evenflo. Playaway preloaded MP3 audiobook player. Health Buddy patient/doctor communication device. IDEO design process Method Cards. Humalog/Humulin disposable prefilled insulin injector pen.

your office for this sort of research? Maybe set up a test kitchen or laboratory?

Gretchen Addi: No. For us, it's most important to be in context with the person we're talking to. In the early stages, we go out and talk to people in their homes, at their work, wherever the context for the product, service, or experience is. We find that if we bring people to a focus group, they might not remember a lot of the things that are actually quite important to them. And if you aren't able to observe them doing things in context, you won't ask the right questions. What people say and what people do are quite often two different things. If you can get them to really reflect on what they're doing, you'll learn what they're really thinking, versus what they think you want to hear.

There is one exception. Further on in a project, we sometimes invite people in for what we call an "unfocus" group. It's a technique that started with a project for a shoe company. We brought in what you might call extreme users of shoes, from people who wear extremely high heels to a foot fetishist. We invited about 10 people to come to our office one evening, and asked them to talk about a couple of pairs of their favorite shoes that we'd asked them to bring along. And then we asked them to create shoes themselves — we provided all sorts of supplies and materials and use of the shop and whatever they needed — and then we talked about the shoes they designed. It was an evening of talking and designing and creating, and the client observed it all and participated in the discussion. The session produced 10 or 12 shoe designs, none of which were necessarily going to end up as an actual design. But it confirmed a lot of what we had already discovered in our research and observations, and it was a great spark at the beginning of the design process.

Jeff Stein: It sounds as if it might also have helped to convince the client of ideas you were beginning to work with already.

Gretchen Addi: They were hearing it from the horse's mouth, so to speak, but even more, they were also hearing from real people what their inspirations and expectations were. We've done a number of these groups. I did one about the design of cars for older people, for empty-nesters, where again we brought in some extremes. We asked the participants to bring in their favorite car and had them talk about it. We had them break into teams and come up with design ideas and ways to market the vehicles based on personas that we provided. The clients were there, and they were amazed at the differences between what they thought was important to people based on their market and data reports, and what they actually heard.

Jeff Stein: It's fascinating that car companies, who invest so much capital in the manufacture of a new car, sometimes get things so wrong. Such as the Honda Element. Honda thought it had developed a car that would appeal to young buyers. But young people have generally ignored it, while their parents and grandparents have flocked to it.

Gretchen Addi: We actually pointed to the Element story as an example of a company missing its target market because it wasn't getting the right information. The project we were working on,

Clockwise from top left: First production mouse for Apple Computer (1980). Polaroid I-Zone instant camera for children and teens. Swifter CarpetFlick carpet sweeper. Stanford Center for Innovations in Learning, Stanford University. Hewlett-Packard Masher portable DJ console.

which is now a concept car, was intended for the empty-nest generation. Our clients kept thinking that it should be an SUV. We kept saying no, no, no, you're all wrong here. You have to listen to these people and hear what they're saying. The market data had been telling our clients that people were buying SUVs. And that was true, but they were buying them, not because they wanted SUVs, but because the car that they really wanted wasn't out there.

Jeff Stein: I imagine that some products require understanding and addressing needs that might vary wildly. For example, IDEO worked on a baby stroller at one point. A stroller would require considering the needs of both the baby and the person who's pushing it, packing it, and caring for the baby.

Gretchen Addi: One of the first questions that our observations prompted was why are strollers so low to the ground? Why is the child staring at everyone's knees and why does the mother need to bend over a thousand times a week just to get her child in and out of the stroller?

Jeff Stein: That is a fascinating question. Why was it?

Gretchen Addi: It may have come from the designs for small, collapsible strollers and the perception of safety by having a low center of gravity. I don't know if there was a compelling reason — other than they had always been that way. The original prams were all up much higher. One of the first things our designers did was to lift it up, which also allowed for storage space underneath. That was a huge revelation, even though afterward, it seemed obvious. But a design that matches its use and human ergonomics well often does seem obvious. This was a case of understanding the range of activities one does with a stroller as well as human ergonomics.

Jeff Stein: And of course, it allows the baby to see more and relate to people's faces, as babies do.

Gretchen Addi: And it allows the mother to communicate with the baby directly instead of having to bend over all the time.

Jeff Stein: You are heading up an initiative within IDEO called THRIVE, which is looking at design and the aging population.

Gretchen Addi: Yes. It's an initiative that came from the notion that we could internally fund areas of study that were potentially important to us and to our clients. It also came from the fact that we can't talk about much of our work because we're under

non-disclosure agreements with our clients; we are not at liberty to share a lot of the things that we do. However, if we fund an initiative ourselves, it is ours to share. THRIVE was our first attempt at that. We have also helped to fund other people doing some sort of research or exploration of interest to us. One example is a group of young women based in London, who call themselves Design Heroine, who wanted to explore the impact of the aging workforce and in particular the needs of the multigenerational knowledge worker.

Jeff Stein: Do you have a comparable initiative targeting younger generations?

Gretchen Addi: We actually have a practice called Zero20, which used to be the toy group within IDEO. It's now expanded into designing not just products but also environments and experiences specifically for zero to 20-year-olds. So, although it still does toys, it's an evolving point of view on youth and families.

Jeff Stein: How did you arrive at zero to 20, instead of zero to nine or 11 to 17?

Gretchen Addi: For me, Zero20 represents the idea, in demographic terms, that the first 20 years of your life defines your generation. Our toy group realized that many of our clients were expressing interest in products, environments, and experiences that went well beyond toys.

Jeff Stein: What sorts of things have they worked on?

Gretchen Addi: The baby stroller was designed before the focus was expanded, but they have looked more broadly at that segment of the population, not so much for marketing, but in order to understand it better in terms of needs and attitudes. It's very much like what we are doing with THRIVE, and that can translate and cross over to specific projects. For example, Zero20 has had input into projects looking at medications and medical products that children need, but that aren't directly designed for them.

Jeff Stein: Such as containers?

Gretchen Addi: Yes, and we've also done work with medications and injections for diabetics, trying to understand how something that must work for an adult can also be made to work for a child.

Jeff Stein: I'm worried about child-proof caps. At some point, I'm not going to be able to open my own medications.

Gretchen Addi: My father has the simplest design work-around—he just gets somebody to open them once and then he leaves them open. But that's one example of many things that warrant another look in terms of what people really need. And sometimes circumstances force you to look at things a bit differently. I have a friend, from the boomer generation, who was recently diagnosed with a brain tumor. One of the results of her surgery was that she has partial paralysis for a period of time. She absolutely refuses to have anything to do with the medical products that are offered to her, like a walker or a cane. She says that they're so ghastly she can't even imagine herself using them. But she needs them to walk. We need a good Crate and Barrel or Martha Stewart approach to designing and merchandising some of these objects.

Jeff Stein: One part of IDEO's work is your Transformation practice, which works with businesses strategically to help them effect transformation within organizations. How do you see generation issues influencing the way business is conducted?

Gretchen Addi: One enormous challenge is that there is a whole generation of people who are thinking about retirement, and there's a lot of knowledge that's going to retire with them. And the group replacing them is much smaller in size.

Jeff Stein: There's a similar issue affecting the architecture profession. Many more people are retiring from the profession than are joining it. Do you find that this is a cultural trend, not just for the architecture profession, but for professions in general?

Gretchen Addi: I think part of it is a question of generational attitudes, but a lot is a question of pure demographics. We have an aging culture here, just like Europe and just like Japan. An

aging culture means that a larger percentage of our population is 50-plus. And each of the generations that have followed has been smaller in terms of size. So we have a shrinking labor pool at the same time that we are going to need a lot more labor to take care of a larger aging population.

Jeff Stein: And at the same time, we're seeing in some places a phenomenon that exacerbates the problem. I'm thinking of the acronym "NEET," which was developed in the United Kingdom, but now is mostly used in Japan — Not in Education, Employment, or Training. It describes Japanese between the ages of 15 and 34, who have essentially either dropped out of the workforce or failed to enter at all. It's so endemic that there's an acronym for it.

Gretchen Addi: One of the things that I don't think we acknowledge is that the boomers are a very large generation of overachievers. Willing to work as hard as they humanly can — and overspending to go along with it. I think we have to acknowledge that their children have looked at them and decided that they're not going to do that, that there has to be a different way. Boomers think that they're passing on these amazing values, and they're not. Maybe it's because they aren't so amazing. But this older generation has a lot of knowledge to share, and they are great elders and mentors and models. Unfortunately, our society isn't set up to foster those kinds of relationships, because we've told all these people they have to retire like their parents. We haven't acknowledged that our thinking is out of date and found alternative ways to keep them in the workforce where they're really needed and valued.

Jeff Stein: Instead, we've invented places like Sun City that segregate them. We've invested so much into them, but then we put them in a position where we can't get it back.

Gretchen Addi: I talk to my daughter about the things my grandmother used to teach me — basic skills, remedies, commonsense solutions. And I feel guilty because I haven't taken the time to pass those on to her. She's going to have to learn all that stuff the hard way. That's a whole reason that magazines like *Real Simple* exist. It's because we haven't passed on that basic, good, simple information. The media have to do it for us, because we don't have the time, or haven't taken the time, to do it ourselves.

Jeff Stein: Is there a role for designers in this?

Gretchen Addi: Yes. We've still got a lot of work to do, in my opinion. We need a general acknowledgment that what's good for this older generation will be good for other generations, too, if we do it the right way — there's a universal quality about it. It isn't really about age. It's about understanding and respecting people's interests and needs and then designing in a way that makes our work valuable to all of them. ■

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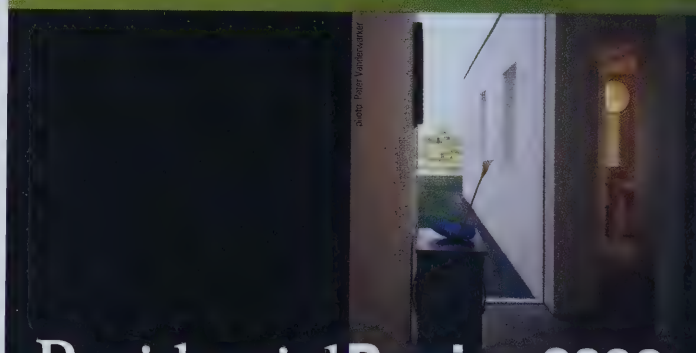

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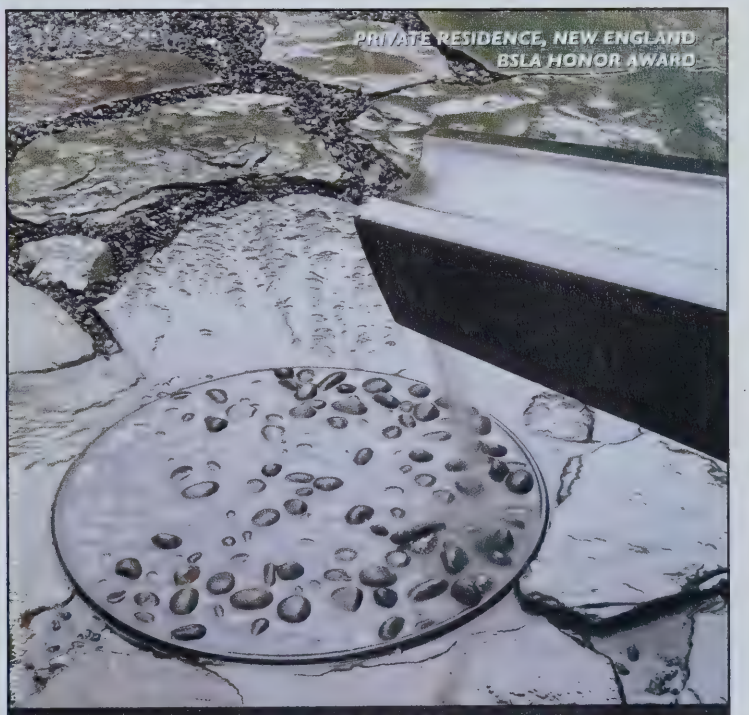

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Covering the Issues

Ski Dubai... "To see Dubai is to experience a kind of futurized present: the borders between what exists today and what might turn up tomorrow feel oddly blurred," writes Ian Parker in "The Mirage" in ***The New Yorker*** ("Art and Architecture" issue, October 17, 2005). Parker describes at length the city's extraordinary ability to convert ambition to built form. The world's tallest building is underway, part of a series of new skyscrapers marching along the beach, akin to Houston unfurled. And like Las Vegas, construction in this desert city-that-naturally-shouldn't-be defies its environment, featuring a black-diamond ski slope, an aquarium, and a new island archipelago called "the World," capped by imported sand. The sheer audacity is awesome, and not in the Valley Girl sense of the word.

The world belongs to IKEA... You think I'm kidding, right? But I'm not.... This cheap-chic purveyor of all-things-flatpacked has teamed with Skanska to create the prefab "BoKlok" houses. Throughout Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Denmark, they've installed 2,500 units since 1997 and plan to build the first UK houses this year. They don't say but do suggest that the US may be next. Kerry Capell describes this along with other IKEA endeavors in ***BusinessWeek*** (November 14, 2005). With a global presence even greater than Wal-Mart, what's the secret to their success? It's their ongoing quest for good design, frugality, beauty, material development, attention to local cultures, and those free paper tape measures at the front door.

A thousand cities bloom... You could say that Bill McKibben's writing is predictable, except when it's not. "The Great Leap: Scenes from China's Industrial Revolution," for ***Harper's*** (December 2005), is a good surprise. McKibben relates a month of off-the-official-journalist-map travels, discussing current development in cultural, economic, and physical contexts. The sheer pace of things is staggering; he argues that this is not excess, this is survival. China today is a story of urban design, planning, and infrastructure with global environmental and societal implications on an unprecedented scale. For example, within China, 20 million people migrate from rural areas to cities every year. That's 40 new Bostons annually.

Magic realism... ***Oxford American*** ("Southern Art and Architecture" issue, Fall 2005) features an in-depth discussion with E. Fay Jones by Roy Reed. Titled "Stressing the Light," Reed compiled the text from a series of 65 separate interviews he began in 2002 and conducted until Jones' death two years later. This conversation with an aging master is just plain wonderful. Even after winning the AIA's Gold Medal, Jones still described his work and his heroes with the open-eyed wonder of a rural kid. Jones got his architectural start as a child by building tree houses of increasing complexity (Yestermorrow take note), including one with a fireplace that yes, ultimately, was its undoing. Jones discusses windows, and starry night skies, and surprises that light makes; he talks about the beauty of repetition, regular rhythm, and symmetries. He declares that the most important design elements are the intangible things. At once magical and real, Jones' straightforward eloquence is entirely refreshing.

Taking charge... They say that the secret of great architecture lies in great clients. In "Master of the House: Why a Company Should Take Control of Its Building Projects," David Thurm, CIO of The New York Times Company and head of its new Manhattan headquarters building project, proves that's true. He draws on his current experience to create this owner's how-to for ***Harvard Business Review*** (October 2005). From the importance of defining and articulating a company mission at the outset, to hiring and insisting on excellent design, to driving meaningful innovation and taking full lifecycle costs into account, Thurm instructs, using real examples to demystify the design and construction process. He is comprehensive and direct, and even addresses the dreaded "value engineering." In doing so, he does architecture a great service. Buy reprints for your entire design team. ■

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA, teaches the architecture studios at Smith College and works with Rogers Marvel Architects.

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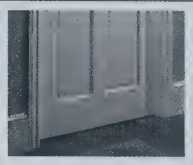
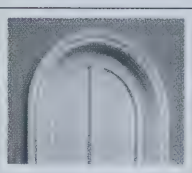
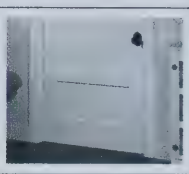

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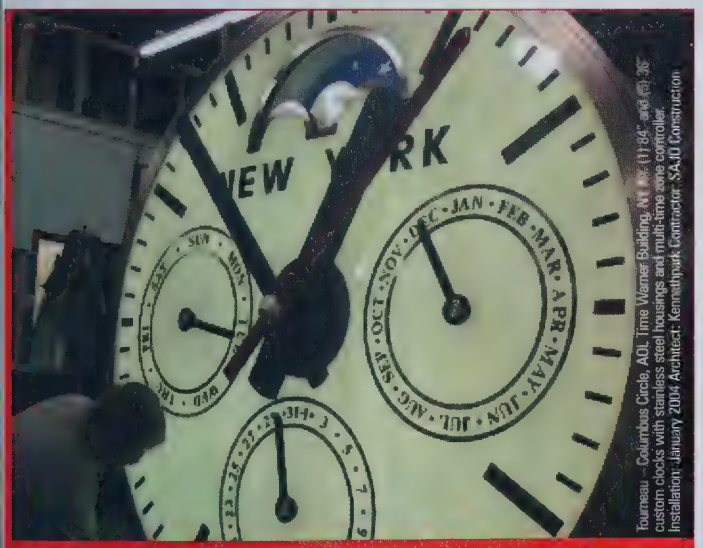

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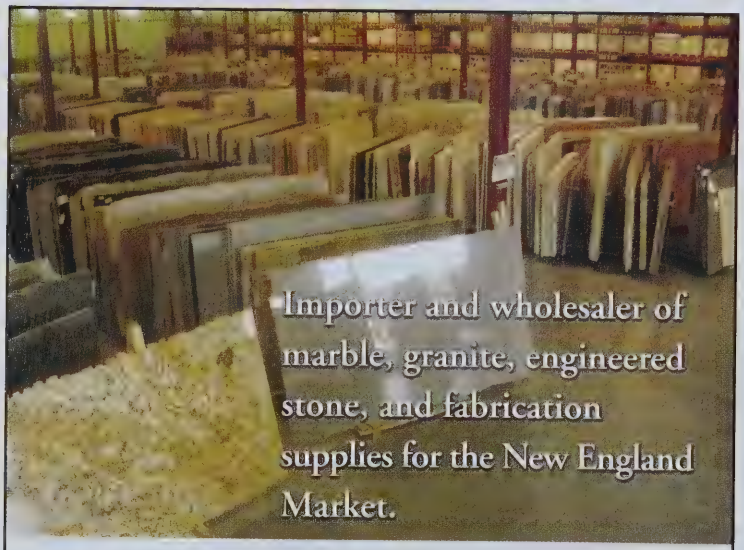

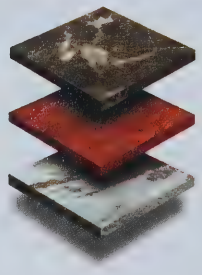

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CRADLE TO CRADLE: REMAKING THE WAY WE MAKE THINGS
by William McDonough and Michael Braungart
North Point Press, 2002
Reviewed by Andrew St. John AIA

No one can accuse Bill McDonough and Michael Braungart of lack of vision. On the assumption that readers share their concern with the current environmental, social, and economic crisis, they take on nothing less than the entire system of industrialized manufacturing that presently dominates the global economy. This book is a synthesis of 20 years of thought on "industrial ecology," the concept that the waste of one industrial process can become the raw material for another.

The writers propose a system that would leave core elements of the old economy in place — centralization of ownership, accumulation of capital, and lack of corporate accountability. In a clever bit of legerdemain, they substitute profit for external regulation in order to motivate corporations to become responsible citizens.

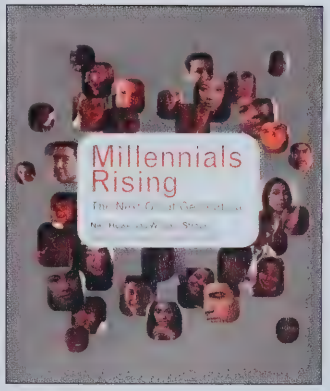
Referring to the current crisis as a failure of design, McDonough proposes an industrial process that abolishes the concepts of "waste" and "throwing away." Instead, he classifies goods and materials as products of one of three "metabolisms": biological (anything whose use actually consumes it, like food and clothing); technical (products of service, like washing machines and cars, with reusable parts); "unmarketables," or toxic materials.

Our new understanding of the environment has taught us that there is nowhere in which to throw things "away" — all the poison-containing waste produced in the manufacture of goods will sooner or later reappear in the air we breathe, the water we drink, or the food we eat. *Cradle to Cradle* proposes three tenets for change: manufacturing processes designed to produce minimal toxic material; using "leftover" production materials as the feedstock of another process; segregating the products of the three metabolisms, ensuring, for example, that food does not contain technical or unmarketable components, and that the materials in your car are easily disassembled for reuse.

Once these fundamentals become part of common awareness, early adopters in industry will use the resources gained through 150 years of profitable operation in the old paradigm to shift voluntarily to the new one. A few companies are already making the transition — Ford is remaking its River Rouge plant into a place to which the employees can bring their children to play, and Milliken is producing carpet with a removable wear surface that can be easily replaced and recycled.

Although the book is geared to large-scale change, the authors do provide a basic roadmap for a designer operating in today's marketplace. Not unlike the steps in any sourcebook for sustainable design, the roadmap outlines "five steps to eco-effectiveness." *Cradle to Cradle* is a manifesto — not easy to read, but important. The next step is to remake the message delivery system to be as compelling as the message.

Andrew St. John AIA has recently co-founded Smith + St. John in Essex, Massachusetts, providing project management services.



MILLENNIALS RISING: THE NEXT GREAT GENERATION
by Neil Howe and William Strauss
Vintage Books, 2000
Reviewed by Virginia Quinn

A colleague recently enlightened me on a hot HR consulting topic: training employees to be sensitive to generational differences in communication styles. While baby boomers favor a personable style of communication that aims to build rapport, Gen-Xers, shaped by a culture of instant results, value efficiency and directness. For example, boomer managers tend to express their instructions face-to-face in diplomatic, team-building terms: "When you have time, would you be able to do this report? It's a really important part of our project." Such an approach drives Gen-X staffers crazy; they'd much prefer that their boss simply e-mail a concise "Do this report by Thursday noon." This was a revelation to boomer me — and corroborated what I was learning about generational differences from *Millennials Rising*.

Millennials Rising is touted as the first in-depth examination of the Millennials — the generation born in 1982 and after. According to Howe and Strauss, "Over the next decade, the Millennial Generation will entirely recast the image of youth from downbeat and alienated to upbeat and

engaged — with potentially seismic consequences for America."

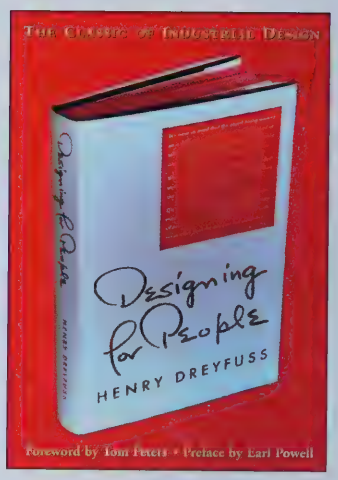
Although the focus of this book is on the generation currently coming of age, the early chapters review their place in the larger cycle of American generations. The authors explain how, at any given time, the four "archetypes" of living generations — artist (the silent generation, born between 1925 and 1942), prophet (boomers, 1943-60), nomad (Gen-X, 1961-81), and hero (Millennials) — are going through one of four life phases: childhood, young adulthood, midlife, and elderhood.

The authors believe the Millennials have much in common with the last "heroic" generation, the GI generation, born between 1901 and 1924 and shaped by World War II. Millennial children will rebel against their hippie boomer and slacker Gen-X parents by adopting the upbeat, high-achieving, team-playing, and civic-minded attributes of the disappearing "greatest generation" as they grow to take their place in the generational cycle.

The book, although chock full of statistical evidence backing up the authors' observations, is written in a chatty style that makes it an easy read for the layperson. Unfortunately, every (yes, every) page is burdened with sidebars, offering occasionally insightful but frequently banal quotations that annoyingly interrupt the flow of the narrative.

Although the oldest of the Millennials are now in their early 20s, it seems premature to be attributing hero status to them. The authors hint at this in their conclusion: part of their purpose in writing this book early in the Millennials' life phase is to change the previous generations' negative perceptions of these kids and encourage parents to set high expectations so their children can fulfill their heroic destiny in the cycle of generational archetypes. We'll see if it's a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Virginia Quinn in an associate editor of *ArchitectureBoston* magazine and the mother of two Millennials in Belmont, Massachusetts.



DESIGNING FOR PEOPLE
by Henry Dreyfuss
Allworth Press, 2003
Reviewed by Faith Baum AIA, IIDA

Can reading the classic, 50-year-old *Designing for People* tell us anything about designing in the 21st century that we don't already know or can't Google? *Designing for People*, first published in 1955 and reissued in 1967 and again in

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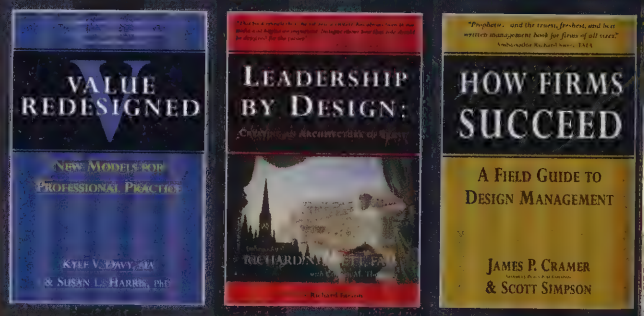

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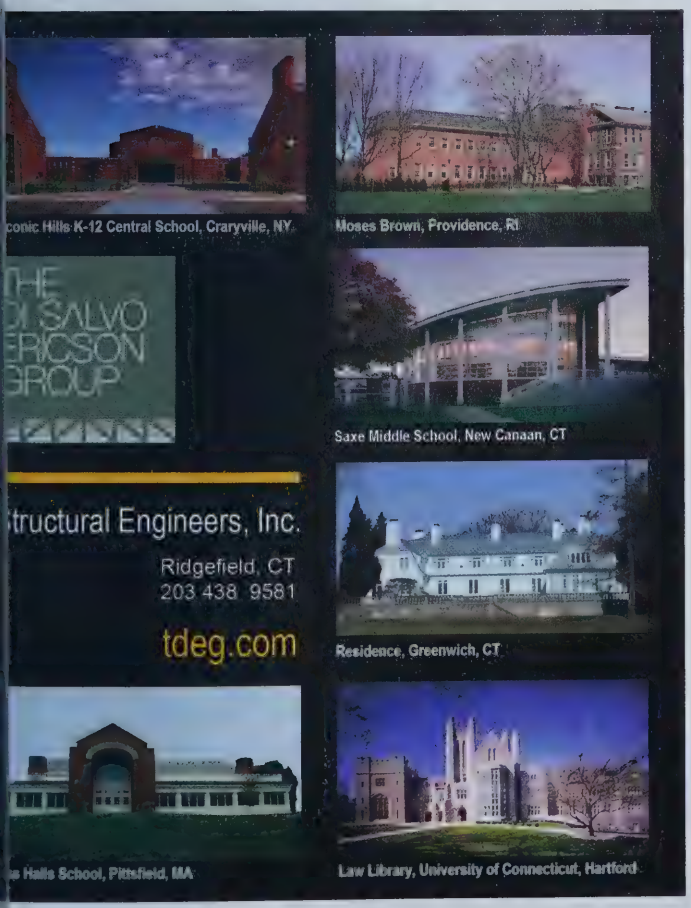
2003, was written by Henry Dreyfuss (1904-1972), considered the father of the industrial design profession.

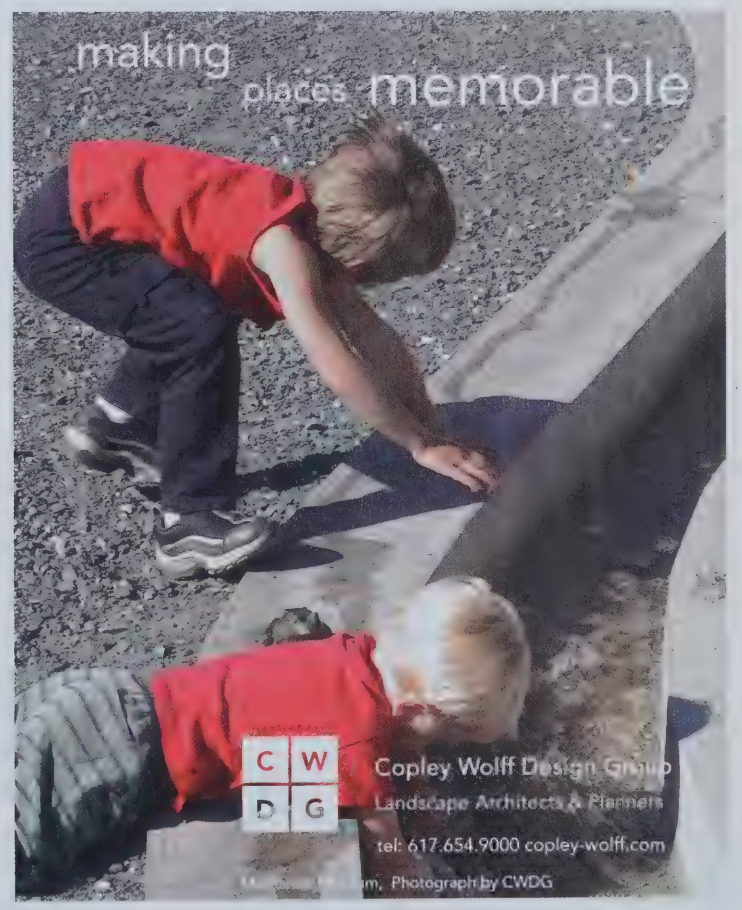
Henry Dreyfuss was a man of his time as well as a man of timeless genius. In *Designing for People*, he tells the story of his life and how he found his calling. Dreyfuss launched his industrial design office in 1925 with the belief that "an honest job of design should flow from the inside out, not the outside in." He believed that he succeeded because of the Great Depression, when American manufacturers had to invest in good design in order to stay in business. *Designing for People* includes now-nostalgic black-and-white photographs of Dreyfuss' designs for radios, airplane interiors, vacuum cleaners, farm equipment, boilers, teacups, and alarm clocks. Some objects are extinct; others haven't changed a bit.

Dreyfuss relates humorous anecdotes about his astonishing career to illustrate his five "yardsticks" of good design: utility; maintenance; cost; sales appeal; and appearance. His book is an accurate medium for his message. Its typeface, color, and form are easy on the eyes. The prose is readable. The book's paperback jacket even includes folded edges that can serve as bookmarks. Henry Dreyfuss' collaborations with engineers, doctors, salespeople, ship builders, and many other experts remind us that there is nothing new about the 21st century's promotion of an interdisciplinary practice. He promotes testing ideas by using models that are as close to full-scale as possible; he himself rented a horse stable to accommodate his full-size mock-ups.

Designing for People exudes belief in the average American as a person who wants good design and is willing to pay for it. Dreyfuss has respect and empathy for "Joe and Josephine," his archetypal imaginary clients. He wants to know everything about them — not just their physical dimensions and abilities, but their psychology as well. Dreyfuss believes that if the J's won't buy it, there is something wrong with it and the designer is responsible for fixing it. *Designing for People* provides an interesting model against which to measure our contemporary accomplishments. In the conclusions to both the 1955 and 1967 editions, Dreyfuss offers predictions, accurately forecasting high-speed rail lines, park-and-ride commuters, and teleconferencing, but unfortunately falling off the mark with a sophisticated recycling system, universal immunizations, and modular housing that accommodates lifecycle changes. Dreyfuss' optimism is infectious, and his narrative reminds us that the focus of the design professional should be not the product but the person.

Faith Baum AIA, IIDA is the principal of Faith Baum Architects in Lexington, Massachusetts, and teaches at Rhode Island School of Design.





Site Work | WEBSITES OF NOTE

GENERATIONS INCORPORATED
www.generationsinc.org
This Boston-based organization connects "older adults with the children who need them most" — taking advantage of the growing number of over-55s to provide kids with tutors and mentors.

STORY CORPS
www.storycorps.org
A national project in conjunction with the Library of Congress and public radio stations, Story Corps captures oral history through stories told to family and friends. Visit the site for samples.

CIVIC VENTURES
www.civicventures.org
"Never before have so many had so much knowledge — with so much time to use it." Taking advantage of this "experience dividend" is the mission of this think tank, which offers terrific online resources, including guidance for boomers who want to change course in the second half of life.

TRANSGENERATIONAL DESIGN MATTERS
www.transgenerational.org
This nonprofit offers research and consulting services to promote design that meets the needs of all generations.

BEACON HILL VILLAGE
www.beaconhillvillage.org
Growing old in their own home is the goal of many people. Beacon Hill Village offers a cost-effective model for making that happen: a neighborhood-based nonprofit, offering services from transportation to help with home maintenance.

AGELAB
http://web.mit.edu/agelab
The AgeLab combines new ideas and technology to improve quality of life, whatever your age.

SAGECROSSROADS
www.sagecrossroads.net
A public forum on the ethics, politics, and economics of aging research and science. From voting blocs to genetic research, it's here. Nothing old about the site's technology — you can download web- and podcasts.

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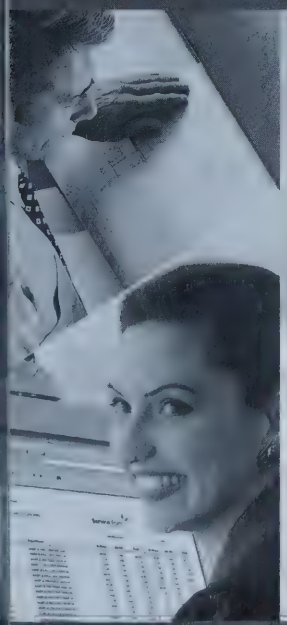

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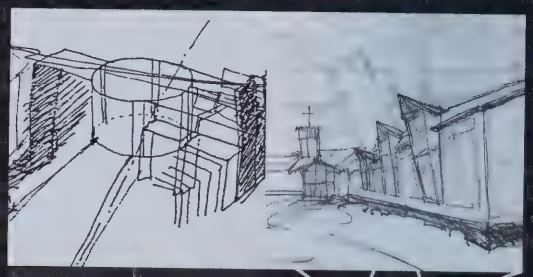

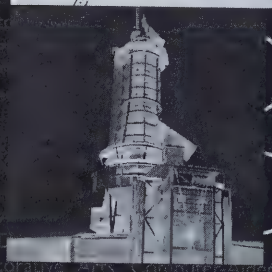

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Labor and Delivery Unit Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital

The day starts at 7 a.m. I am standing at "the board" — an oversized white-board grid of initials, rooms, conditions, and other critical clinical information — waiting as six residents gather around to present their current patients and review the night's events. For now, this is where the action is. It is easy to tell who is the "day team" and who is the "night team": the day residents stand as the overworked and tired night team sits in a semi-circle.

An intern in her first year of residency presents a case, nervously looking at her notes to make sure she remembers all the details. The chief resident looks on, ready to help out if she gets stuck. I listen as each patient is presented and try to pull one pertinent teaching point from the case that will be helpful to all. Behind us, the nurses listen in; a few medical students hide near the back, hoping not to be asked any questions. There are only a few patients today, so we finish quickly. Visibly relieved, the night team quickly retreats to go home and sleep. I sympathize, remembering my own experience as a resident, trying to reverse days and nights, drawing all the shades at home. I grab a Diet Coke from the mini-fridge in the nurses' station before heading for the conference room, where the day residents are now congregating. The topic for today's discussion is preeclampsia.

I work on a busy labor-and-delivery unit (L&D) as a high-risk obstetrician at Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital. L&D is on one of the top floors — 10 stories up — and is designed as a large circle with all the rooms around a central nursing station. The focus of L&D is the fetal monitors in the station; through them, you can see, hear, and almost feel each patient on the unit. The sound of fetal heartbeats is our background music — you can hear them throughout the unit. There are two operating rooms, a recovery area, the conference room, and 12 patient rooms, the outer ring of this solar system. The design provides windows for each of the patient rooms — full-height windows that allow patients to gauge the weather, catch a glimpse of the Fenway scoreboard, and measure the syncopated flashing of the CITGO sign. The windows open the ring up and embrace the floor full of expecting mothers. I glance out on my way to the conference room. Today will be sunny.

The floor is busy with a changing mix of nurses, obstetricians, anesthesiologists, medical students, residents, housekeepers, and support staff. Everyone is coming and going, giving report, changing shifts, or administering medications. Inside the conference room, the cool hues of morning light stream through the glass. I offer to close the curtains so we can see the PowerPoint presentation better, but we all agree to squint a little. Letting the curtain cord drop, I notice the first clouds of the day — not clouds of foreboding, but the clouds that represent the natural cycles of convection and replenishment.

The day beats on as patients start to occupy the labor rooms. I visit my patients and introduce myself. Each room has a different story, a different view, and a new life coming to join the world. One patient today is having twins; another is having her fourth baby at age 45; yet another is having her first baby after a difficult pregnancy complicated by diabetes. In one room, a young father reads the sports section of the *Globe*; in another, an elderly woman plumps a pillow for the woman, her daughter, who will soon give birth to her first grandchild. I weave through the unit following the circle. After meeting each patient, I follow the chorus of fetal beating hearts back to the central nursing station where each baby is monitored, and from where I can watch all three rooms at the same time. From here, I am orchestrating a birthday celebration for each patient. Through the windows, I can see the intense blue of a spring sky. I catch my breath, and anticipate the unexpected. ■

Tamara C. Takoudes MD, FACOG, is a high-risk obstetrician at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston and is an instructor of clinical obstetrics at Harvard Medical School.

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In Your Face: The Good and the Bad of the Ugly

Where would we be without ugliness? The quick answer is: in a much better place. Only after reflection do we realize that ugliness often serves a purpose.

It's easy to label something "ugly" — it may be the most common term of popular critical judgment. Like pornography, we know ugly when we see it. The hideous, repugnant, gruesome, repulsive, discordant, loathsome, disgusting, discordant — we not only recognize the ugly, but we also expertly identify all its subspecies. (Language can be counted on to provide a bountiful vocabulary for the concepts that resonate most in our lives.)

Ugliness has obvious utility in survival mechanisms in which the ability to recognize ugliness might warn us away from things and conditions that would do us harm. But the ugly is often also synonymous with the new; we recoil from that which is unfamiliar and threatening. Confrontation with the new — the cycle of rejection, analysis, understanding, and adoption — is the engine of human achievement. The participants in this issue's roundtable discussion argue the point forcefully and convincingly.

And yet it is hard to escape the uncomfortable feeling that we are seeing the rise of a new cult of ugliness that does not necessarily represent a parallel flourishing of vibrant new ideas. The willfully ugly — ugliness for the sake of ugliness — springs from a different well and values a peculiarly aggressive cynicism. Distinguishing among this ultimately hollow, smug ugliness and the ugliness that heralds true innovation and the ugliness that springs from sheer ineptitude may be one of the most difficult challenges facing the intellectually engaged citizen today.

We fool ourselves into believing that we can be impartial judges. Authorship matters. Just as in high school, the cool kids get a free pass and the loser kids get left out. Surely much of the debate over New York City's 2 Columbus Circle — Edward Durell Stone's Huntington Hartford Museum — revolves around Stone and not his building. The Palladian tower of Boston's International Place would have been a non-starter if its designer had not been Philip Johnson. Imagine any number of buildings by certified cool kids Rem Koolhaas and Zaha Hadid; now imagine how they would have been received if they had been designed by any of the relatively anonymous design firms that make up the bulk of the profession. (The argument that those firms would not have had the ability to design a Koolhaas or Hadid building is hardly relevant, especially as imitations are already starting to percolate down through the profession.) The question of authorship is often a question of celebrity, but we are also more willing to give the benefit of the doubt to those who are proven purveyors of new ideas.

In this issue's roundtable discussion, Robert Campbell FAIA notes that the "gap between the architectural subculture and the taste of the larger world is the biggest issue in architecture today." He is right. Normal people — those who are not architects — are rightfully suspicious of acts of willful ugliness. Willful ugliness is inherently violent — an in-your-face assertion of ego that is both uncivil and uncivic behavior. But they also often distrust what is simply unfamiliar.

To produce an ugly work of enduring significance takes talent combined with some measure of brashness and disregard for the rules of engagement.

We need to recognize and understand the utility of the ugly. But in making a case for its usefulness, let's not forget that it is not the only path to advancement. Quiet works of great elegance and sheer, yes, beauty are made every day. To produce a beautiful work of enduring significance requires talent. To produce an ugly work of enduring significance takes talent combined with some measure of brashness and disregard for the rules of engagement. As we applaud the courage that the latter requires, we should stop to ask which approach is really the more difficult.

Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA
Editor

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We have a special place of honor in our library for our messiest magazines — the most dog-eared, highlighted, scribbled-in-the-margins, and littered with bits of sticky paper. Your "Generations" issue [March/April 2006] will take up residence there.

Our work focuses on user-centered design with everyone in mind, sometimes called universal or inclusive design. We hunt for ways to inspire students and practitioners to embrace inclusive design as a challenge worthy of their best thinking. There is a role for good information about human factors, anthropometrics, and ergonomics. But none of that will deliver good design. There is no substitute for the excitement of insight born of observation and interaction with a variety of bodies and brains interacting with the environment. Dr. Takoudes' endpage article offered a nice proof of the potential of design born of attention to users. Her description of the meaningful organization of space, the beat of fetal monitors in the central nurses' station, and the full-height windows in the patient rooms on the "outer rings of this solar system," celebrated a great, human-centered place.

I applaud the optimism that found its way into every story in this issue. It is not often we can relish a whole issue of anything in which every article makes the case for our mission.

Valerie Fletcher
Adaptive Environments
Boston

I would like to commend you on your "Generations" issue. One of the emerging concerns that planners, architects, and designers will need to address are the needs of older LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) people. An increasing number of LGBTs in their 60s and 70s and older have lived much of their adult lives "out of the closet." The boomers are soon to begin their "third age" and, having created their own families and lives, have no intention of simply accepting the mainstream notion of what their older years should be like. Because of this, Stonewall Communities (www.stonewallcommunities.com), a not-for-profit organization, is creating senior living communities targeted specifically to older lesbians and gay men, their friends, and families. Our first community, Stonewall at Audubon Circle, will be an independent living community of about 65 condominiums; we are also developing Stonewall Connections, which will coordinate special services that our residents and other community members may want or need as they age.

As your issue pointed out, the notion of what it means to age is changing — and the LGBT community is in the vanguard of that change.

David Aronstein
Stonewall Communities
Boston

"Living Room" [March/April 2006] encapsulates much of my experience in central Florida. Beverly Hills (Citrus County) began as a retirement community in 1963. Its median age — 68 years in the 2000 census — has been dropping slowly. The nearby elementary school doubles as a hurricane shelter. Three years ago I moved from Boston to the older part of town, where narrow two-lane roads without sidewalks accommodate drivers, walkers, cyclists, people using scooters to aid mobility, and service vehicles parked to the side of the street. Citizen networks, the sheriff's office, and the use of reverse 911 technology keep community members informed in emergencies. People without cars have access to county van service, private taxis, and volunteer drivers. In addition to addressing myriad interests, dozens of local clubs are geared toward former occupations and former places of residence, as well as different creeds and ethnicities.

I am a baby boomer, living in the house originally built for my parents when they retired here in 1980. Since then, the town's range of activities has mushroomed and continues to do so in tandem with rapid development. The retirees I know are tremendously vital, both pursuing avocations and employing their lifelong skills on a volunteer basis. Web access plays a major role in our civic and other organizations, services, and schools. In addition to enabling me to live and do business here, the Internet has helped bridge generations by enhancing coordination within and between communities.

Elissa Malcohn
Beverly Hills, Florida

I was interested to see your critical look at the rise of age-restricted developments in Massachusetts ["Where Will the Children Play?" March/April 2006], but bristled at the suggestion that the baby-boomer generation intends to create "a world, apparently, that does not include children." While some boomers are finding solace in these child-free developments, many others around the country are working hard on behalf of children — and Boston's boomers are no exception.

Through the Experience Corps program, hosted in Boston by Generations Incorporated, more than 300 people over 55 are currently working with 2,280 students in 15 of Boston's public elementary schools. These "active adults" are using the second half of life, not to hide from children, but to help them succeed. As a result of their tutoring (Experience Corps members logged 44,617 hours in Boston classrooms last year alone), students who worked one-on-one with tutors showed three times the improvement that typical struggling students without tutors did.

Nationally, the trend toward civic engagement among older Americans is on the rise. About half of adults 55 and over volunteer, and three out of five consider retirement to be "a time to be active and involved, to start new activities, and to set new goals." For every age-restricted

housing development, there are hundreds of boomers around the country sharing their experience with children to help them develop the skills to succeed in school and in life. And with 77 million boomers about to turn 60, the reinvention of retirement has only just begun. In that sense, the article's conclusion hits the nail on the head: "Prepare to be surprised."

Jeremy Cluchey
Experience Corps
Washington, DC

As someone who could be a late Gen-Xer or early Gen-Yer, I can certainly appreciate the difficulty in coming to terms with conflicting generational outlooks. However, I disagree with Thomas de Monchaux ["Solving for X," March/April 2006] when he argues that current architectural teaching practices are flawed and risk "turning every generation of architects into a Generation X." First of all, I resent Douglas Coupland's simplistic characterization of Generation X as moody, dark, and pessimistic. But that detail alone avoids the bigger issue here. Doesn't every generation seek to impart its ideals on those coming before and after them? This is the basis for the very healthy and dynamic dialogue between the ages that results from people trying to find their place in the world. As a young designer, I often see signs of older generations relying upon younger ones for new ideas and methods. Conversely, I carry with me the lessons learned in architecture school from older generations. I don't often draw with pen and ink on mylar, but I understand the skill required and how it forces you to know what you draw.

While I very much admire Rem Koolhaas and the other contemporary Dutch architects for their wit, humor, cleverness, and observation skills, I do agree with de Monchaux that there is a "critical distance" between their work and their critique. However, this trend toward ambiguity in the positions we take is not a creation of the Dutch architects; we need look no further than contemporary culture to see the full extent of the problem at hand.

Thomas Collins, Assoc. AIA, LEED
Boston

The story is familiar. The "Solving for X" feature [March/April 2006] played on the stereotypical Generation X bashing of the early 1990s. The post-boomer generation — those born between 1965 and 1980, who are currently between 26 and 41 — is much more complicated than the author's reduction of cultural cynicists.

Architecture Generation X (AG-X) represents the pioneers of digital technology who have waded through the murky debates of CAD versus pencil, and who redefined the meaning of "rendering." This generation also facilitated the technological visions of older architects. Looking beyond the Netherlands, there are many examples of American AG-Xers who push the formal and cultural design boundaries, including John Hong and Jinhee Park, featured in your same issue's Elsa Dorfman feature.

AG-Xers are the first generation to grow up with government-mandated ADA requirements, clumsy computerized ARE exams, and LEED awareness, all the while also serving as IDP guinea pigs. Given that AG-X is also the smallest age-demographic in architecture, curiously sandwiched between the firm-owning boomers and fresh-out-of-college Gen-Yers, predictions are that AG-X will be essential to the survival of well-established firms that are already competing for talented mid-level professionals who long ago shed their slacker reputation for Boston-sized mortgages.

Generation X is more tolerant, diversified, and consistently difficult to label. Sure, Gen-Xers are cynical of regulation, but they are also less likely to impose their personal dogma on society, opting instead for something that is uniquely iconic, sensitive, and culturally responsible. They are not only going to be your next architect, but also your next client.

Emily Grandstaff-Rice AIA
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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ArchitectureBoston is mailed to members of the Boston Society of Architects and AIA members in New England and New York City. Subscription rate for others is $26 per year. Call 617.951.1433 x228 or e-mail architectureboston@architects.org.

ArchitectureBoston is custom published bimonthly for the Boston Society of Architects by The Pohly Company.
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The redesign of *ArchitectureBoston* was supported by a grant from the Graham Foundation.

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America Starts Here: Kate Ericson and Mel Ziegler

MIT List Visual Art Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts
February 9 – April 9, 2006

Did you miss this show? That's OK — get the catalogue. Once seen, even in photographs, the temporary place-based work of Kate Ericson and Mel Ziegler will become permanent in your memory. This engaging exhibition and insightful catalogue document groundbreaking works created between 1984 and 1994, just before Ericson's tragic death at the age of 39.

Imagine this: For *House Monument* (1986), all the lumber necessary to build a two-story house is stacked in an LA gallery space. Handwritten on 1,300 pieces of plywood and 2-by-6s are more than 1,000 quotations from the philosophy, poetry, and literature of house and home. Gallery viewers read and restack the lumber looking for the perfect board. This lumber is offered through a classified ad and sold at half price to a young couple who agree to use it to build their primary residence, and agree that all evidence of the quotations will be hidden within the structure of the home. The last photograph shows this finished house in Costa Mesa, California.

This work shakes and expands our understanding of contemporary art practice as we share in the artists' conversation about the relationship between ideas, a chosen site, a specific community, and cultural questions of what is art in a pluralist America. Evident in the artwork of Ericson and Ziegler are personal searches and passions, observations of vernacular landscapes, and engagement with '60s conceptual art, all channeled through a deep desire to connect with the viewer.

Something more essential and rare is also evident in this exhibition — insight into a rich, collaborative working relationship and the deep respect, humor, and love put into the making of work that becomes a gift to encounter.

Ross Miller is a public artist currently developing artwork for Central Artery green space and the Ancient Fishweir Project (www.fishweir.org) on Boston Common.

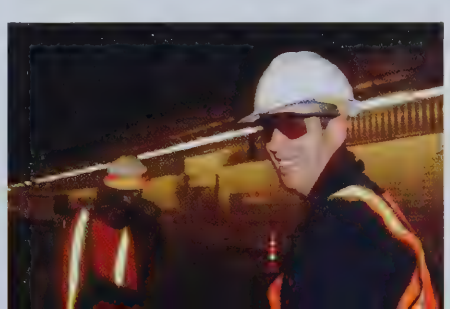
The Big Twig Tunnel Tapes: Boston's Big Dig Sings

Produced by Jay Critchley (2004)
CD and MP3s at www.bigtwig.org

On three occasions during 2003, a group of "singers, musicians, photographers, videographers, and curios" led by Provincetown artist Jay Critchley descended into the soon-to-be-completed Big Dig tunnels below Boston. There they recorded ambient sound and their own musical performances before subjecting the tapes to audio manipulation. The results became an enjoyable compilation titled *The Big Twig Tunnel Tapes*.

While its name alludes to the twig-like geography of the Big Dig and the eco-impact of highway construction, *Tapes* celebrates the inherent musicality of the tunnels before they welcomed automobiles. Its musical range impresses, from the futuristic ambience of "The Road Not Taken" to the danceable "Green House Mix" to Critchley's rap foray/social commentary "Tunnel Vision." The compilation's highlight is the Queen of the Night's aria from *The Magic Flute*. The beautiful track concludes with astonished tunnel workers happening upon the operatic performance — a reminder that acts of inspiring humanity are possible anywhere.

Kevin Neary works for the Boston Society of Architects.



Brian Healy AIA
Conversations on Architecture

The Boston Society of Architects
January 10, 2006

Brian Healy often surprises people when they first meet him. His work says prima donna, but in appearance and general attitude, he's more Lou Reed than Lou Kahn. He's also the former BSA president who resurrected "Conversations on Architecture." Healy believes passionately in design, and through the program, he has brought the famous (Machado and Silvetti) and the esoteric (Mark Goulthorpe) to a public audience in an informal setting.

Twenty years ago, Healy presented his work at an original Conversation, when the forum was exclusive and members wore tuxes. Now it's his show, and after two years of moderating, he temporarily handed off the job to Robert Campbell so that he could sit in the hot seat once again. Campbell introduced Healy with an anecdote: it was 1985 and he went to interview Healy in his office on McGrath Highway in Somerville. The space was a loft the size of a football field, entirely empty, except at the end where Healy sat alone at a drafting table, surrounded by exquisite models and stacks of CDs.

The image of the lone architect lingered as Healy presented his winning entry for The Mill Center for the Arts Competition in Hendersonville, North Carolina (model photo, above). This was the product of a singular mind: a holistic, complete, yet complex understanding of a site and program. Healy transformed an entire city block of a neglected Appalachian town into a performing arts center including a major concert hall, experimental theater, children's museum, art gallery with artists' studios, and a café. He then wrapped the site at street level with the most active pieces of the program and created a huge, landscaped amphitheater — the "bowl" — above. The proposal was a compelling mix of urban moves, the kind often considered, but rarely built — too expensive, too elaborate, too strange.

Participants in the packed room were intrigued by the bowl, but what they really wanted to understand was his *process*. This is what's so tough about Healy: his projects seem to come out of his mind whole. He makes a few sketches and then hands them off to an associate. Of course, while project concepts might emerge whole, buildings don't. It's comforting to know that he obsesses over the obstacles that reality throws his way, just like the rest of us.

Rachel Levitt is a designer and writer.

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Watching the Detectives

The place: The forensics lab at Simpson Gumpertz & Heger in Waltham, Massachusetts. Founded 50 years ago by MIT professors, SGH specializes in design; in repair and rehabilitation of existing structures; and, most famously, in evaluations of building performance — solving the scientific mysteries of why and how buildings fail. Investigative work is carried on inside the lab and out in the field, where it can be as physical as mountaineering. In fact, a 2½-story tower just off the lobby serves as a sheer vertical surface on which young engineers can practice rappelling.

The lab: A suite of large rooms, one devoted to compression testing, one to roofing materials, one to petrography (the optical study of rocks and concrete), and several more to general materials testing. Other tests are conducted in the warehouse out back.

8:35 An engineer walks into the lab with samples of some fireproofing that has failed: smoke from a kitchen fire in an apartment building escaped into the floors above. One sample is red — apparently the intumescent fireproofing specified by the architect, which was supposed to expand and form a protective seal when exposed to heat. The other sample is of an unknown blue material discovered in certain areas where the fireproofing should have been. The engineer asks the lab's manager, Art Davies, to help determine whether the red material performed correctly and to pinpoint the identity of the blue stuff.

8:42 Art and the engineer put the red material under one of the lab's large fume hoods and heat it with a propane torch. It responds the way an intumescent material should: it puffs up.

8:50 The blue material, given the same treatment, shrivels and turns to hard ash.

9:05 Art scans the samples with a machine that detects and plots the infrared energy within each material. The result is a pattern of peaks and valleys similar to an EKG readout; each chemical's infrared reading is unique, like a fingerprint. Art will be able to tell a lot about both these substances by comparing them to each other and to an extensive computer library of roughly 10,000 other materials.

9:20 Back at his desk, Art considers his task list. In addition to further investigation of the fireproofing, he needs to write a report detailing the lab's findings on the compression strength of a particular concrete; and another report on an infrared analysis of several waterproofing samples, the chemical make-up of which will influence an engineer's choice of a compatible material to use for repairs. He'll also be doing a lot of juggling, figuring out how to resolve competing demands for time and equipment among SGH's five offices nationwide.

9:29 Art opens two FedEx envelopes containing samples and requisitions. The first is from an engineer in the San Francisco office: a sealant installed between concrete panels may not be the material originally specified by SGH. The other is from the LA office: a small black rectangle of some shiny cracked material that resembles an alligator wallet. The accompanying note says: "We're told it's reinforced neoprene but doubt it. Can you help ID it?"

10:14 In the physical testing lab, technician Bob Sovie sets up a test regarding the breaking point of four-inch slate tiles. A school has been experiencing excessive breakage on a tile roof, and SGH is testing proposed replacements. Bending over a large compression machine, Bob positions two steel loading noses pointing upward and spaced two inches apart. Each of the 10 samples will rest on the noses while a third nose gradually presses downward from above and eventually breaks the slate in half, like a karate chop delivered in excruciatingly slow motion. Bob spends about 20 minutes checking and re-checking that the noses are aligned exactly according to the test specifications. The lab is kept at 73 degrees with

50 percent humidity to ensure consistent testing conditions.

10:35 The San Francisco engineer calls Art to make sure the FedEx-ed samples have arrived. They move on to discuss another project: the engineer had asked Art to analyze some samples of a concrete that's been turning blue. Art has employed energy dispersive spectroscopy, which reveals which elements are present, and in what concentrations. "Nope," he tells the engineer, who was concerned that the blue might indicate the presence of toxic dye, "there's nothing where chromium would be."

10:44 In the materials lab, a co-op student, supervised by lab technician Pat Kelley, is blending mortaring compound in what looks like a gigantic Kitchen-Aid mixer and pouring it into cube molds. By creating "knowns" under controlled conditions, they'll have something reliable against which to compare unknown substances in a future test.

An engineer asks Art about the advisability of using a round wire brush to sample asphalt. Art: "No. It'll just turn to gum."

11:15 An engineer asks Art about the advisability of using a round wire brush to sample asphalt. Art: "No. It'll just turn to gum. I'd go out on a really cold day, when the asphalt is brittle, and use an ice scraper."

12:00 Lunch. Some people attend optional seminars or presentations. Others sit at small tables talking with colleagues. There's also an SGH book discussion group; the most recent selection was *Renovating Concrete Structures*.

1:17 Bob is about to calibrate a couple of spray racks, but an engineer has walked in requesting equipment to take out on a job. Together they assemble what's needed: spray rack; garden hose; concentrated nozzle sprayer; floodlights; extension cords. One piece of equipment isn't here; Bob says the person who checked it out should be bringing it back this afternoon. "How soon do you need it?"

"Two hours ago," the engineer answers, packing his bags. He decides he can manage without it and heads out to investigate a leaky fraternity house.

1:35 Art goes out to the warehouse to see whether some metal shelf units might be converted to frames for holding 42 rubber and plastic roofing samples. A test will begin this week for a roofing manufacturer who wants to know how his material stacks up against the competition. The samples will be subjected to water, acids, bases, oil, and kerosene;

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baked at 140 degrees for three months in a room-sized oven; and subsequently tested for hardness, tensile properties, lap strength, and dimensional stability, as well as undergoing infrared analysis to see what changes have occurred.

2:50 In the warehouse, Bob and a co-op student set up the spray-rack calibration test. Spray racks are used to assess whether new construction meets performance standards for water-tightness, and also to troubleshoot leakage in older buildings. SGH has 30 racks, which need to be re-calibrated every six months to make sure they're all shooting out consistent volumes of water. Unlike the many tests requiring ultra-sophisticated equipment, the mechanism here couldn't be simpler: a copper box divided into four separate chambers, each fitted with a tube that drains into a one-gallon milk bottle.

3:10 The test begins. The co-op student positions himself slightly to the left, holding the heavy copper rack 12 inches away from the collection box. "Ready, set, go," Bob says, whipping away a sheet of protective plastic from the front of the box and clicking on his stopwatch as the student turns on the water. After one minute he says, "Stop," and the student instantly shuts off the water. They carry the milk bottles over to a digital scale and weigh the contents, which according to test specifications must fall between 250 and 630 grams. These do: the lightest is 342 grams, and the heaviest is 520.9.

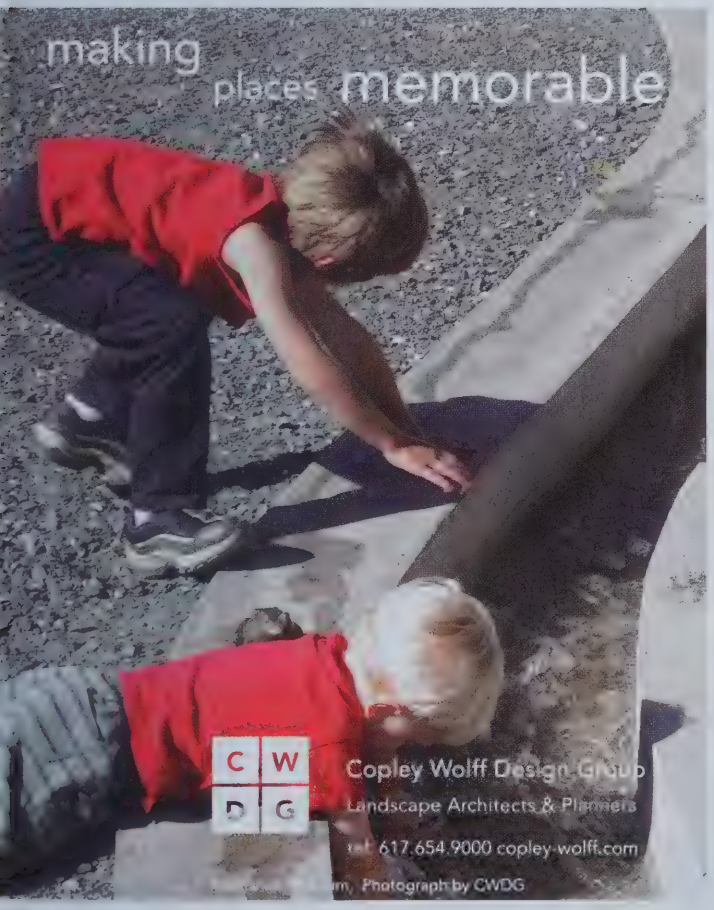
3:27 The rack performs beautifully when positioned in the center, but when tested in the right-hand position, it comes up short, with one bottle collecting only 241.2 grams. Bob explores the nozzles with a finger, and pulls some gunk out of one. "Let's try it again." But this time the last bottle only collects 168.3 grams.

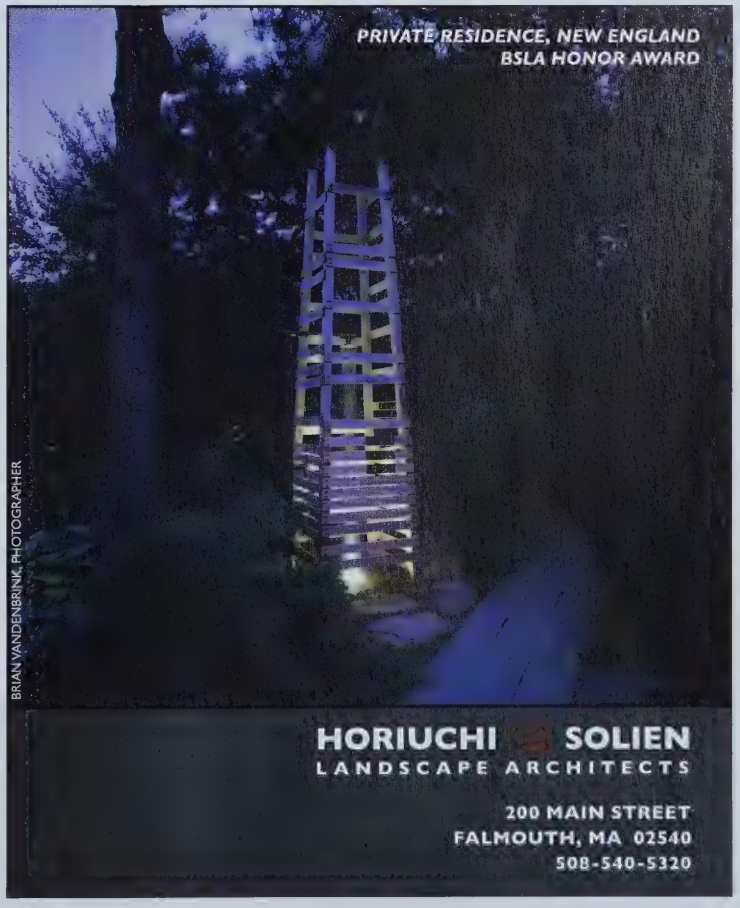
3:55 After adjusting the water pressure within the spray rack and recording the new gauge reading, the team spends a half hour running through the entire sequence of tests again. The numbers come out perfectly. The drenched co-op student begins testing the second spray rack.

4:50 A team of engineers strides into the lab, loaded down with equipment: halogen lights; gas meters; harnesses; safety vests; ladders; hammers; ropes; cameras; ultrasonic testing equipment; and yards of extension cord. They've spent the day at the Longfellow Bridge, examining the pier interiors.

"Was it everything you dreamed it would be?" one engineer ribs a young colleague. Then he says, a little more seriously, but still smiling, "Hey, now you've been inside the bridge. Not many people can say that." ■

Joan Wickersham is a writer in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She visited SGH twice — first to observe, and then to have it all explained again.





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As we come closer to May 15, the date of our name change, we will post further information on our website.

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Pretty Ugly

Participants

Hansy Better is a principal of Studio Luz Architects in Boston and a member of the architecture faculties at RISD, BAC, and MIT.

Robert Campbell FAIA is the architecture critic for *The Boston Globe*.

Michael Hays is professor of architectural theory at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and adjunct curator of architecture at the Whitney Museum.

Dan Monroe is executive director and CEO of the Peabody Essex Museum.

Elizabeth Padjen FAIA is the editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

Louise Sacco is the permanent acting interim executive director of the Museum of Bad Art.

Deborah Weisgall is a novelist and writes about the arts for *The New York Times* and other publications.

Elizabeth Padjen: As we were planning this issue, someone who apparently has a rosier view of the world than I do said about this theme, "Ugly? That sounds so negative. Why don't you have an issue about beauty?" All of you are here today because you understand that that's not the point; that ugliness is not the opposite of beauty. The ugly operates on its own terms and has its own usefulness.

In fact, it seems that ugliness is getting a lot of respect these days. If you were to counsel a young architect, artist, or musician on how to make a career, how to gain critical respect, you might even say, "Go for the ugly." Is there a sense that the ugly is somehow equated with sophistication?

Michael Hays: The only recent theory of the ugly that I know of is one that tries to unhinge the opposition between beautiful and ugly, as well as unhinge the idea that the ugly is always inferior. It tries to say that, in avant-garde art, the ugly appears most often when techniques and materials are pushed forward. If you think of modern music, the atonal music of Schoenberg and Webern sounded dissonant and ugly, but its ugliness derived from pushing technique past some sort of barrier.

Deborah Weisgall: If you consider ugly to be the opposite of beautiful, you're also defining beauty in a very conventional way. If something is ugly, it's going to push convention. A story: I have a very sophisticated mother; she has a fantastic eye. I took her to the Picasso/Braque exhibition at MoMA some years ago. When we came to the "Demoiselles D'Avignon," she said to me, "Now, Deb, would you hang that in the middle of your living room?" It was a brilliant remark, because all of a sudden it made me see that painting as if I were looking at it in 1907. I didn't know the answer. Her remark made its ugliness clear, because it is sublimely, fantastically ugly. On the other hand, people hang crucifixes in their living rooms; is there anything uglier than the representation of a man dying in a brutal way? So I wonder if art isn't in some ways trying to give us the ability to look at the ugly and see the truth in it.

Dan Monroe: The connection between beauty and art is strictly a 19th-century construct. Before that, beauty wasn't associated with aesthetics; it was associated with moral good. The polarities that we establish to frame experience — truth, beauty, good, bad — are conceptual constructs that really don't work very well when you try to define one by putting a "not" sign in front of another. "Not

"NOTHING IS BEAUTIFUL, ONLY MAN: ON THIS PIECE OF NAIVETE RESTS ALL AESTHETICS, IT IS THE FIRST TRUTH OF AESTHETICS. LET US IMMEDIATELY ADD ITS SECOND: NOTHING IS **UGLY** BUT DEGENERATE MAN — THE DOMAIN OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT IS THEREWITH DEFINED."

— FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

"HE HAD A BIG HEAD AND A FACE SO **UGLY** IT BECAME ALMOST FASCINATING."

"THE SECRET OF **UGLINESS** CONSISTS NOT IN IRREGULARITY, BUT IN BEING UNINTERESTING."

— RALPH WALDO EMERSON

"ABSOLUTE AND ENTIRE **UGLINESS** IS RARE."

— JOHN RUSKIN

"NO OBJECT IS SO BEAUTIFUL THAT, UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, IT WILL NOT LOOK **UGLY**."

— OSCAR WILDE

"BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP, BUT **UGLY** GOES CLEAN TO THE BONE."

— DOROTHY PARKER

"TO THE ARTIST THERE IS NEVER ANYTHING **UGLY** IN NATURE."

— AUGUSTE RODIN

THAT BEBORN, MADAM, BUT IN THE MORNING WILL BE SOBER AND YOU WILL STILL BE **UGLY**."

— WINSTON CHURCHILL

beautiful" doesn't necessarily equal ugly. Furthermore, there are constant fluctuations in cultural contexts, so what's beautiful at one time is not beautiful later, and then sometimes is seen again as beautiful. There are a number of prominent 17th-, 18th-, and 19th-century artists who are out of favor today; we might look at their work and thinks it's awful, or we might "rediscover" it.

Louise Sacco: One of the things that gave rise to the mission of the Museum of Bad Art was the observation that, if a group of people walks past Newbury Street's art galleries, and somebody says, "Wow, look at that!," you can bet they've found something ugly. People don't react that way to a piece that's spectacularly beautiful. The spectacularly ugly is more striking than the spectacularly beautiful.

confronted with the "other." At the same time, it's often related to a fascination with whatever is not considered normative. I'm thinking, for example, of films such as *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Elephant Man*. It's a non-intellectual response.

Deborah Weisgall: You are right — it's a very visceral reaction, which can be either liberating or alienating.

Elizabeth Padjen: But the aesthetics of ugly is an intellectual proposition.

Dan Monroe: My response to seeing something really ugly, which admittedly has developed over a considerable time, would be to say, "That's really interesting." If it's powerful enough to command my attention and provoke a reaction of "Wow, that's really ugly," I've learned that there's a

intellectual revelation. An example in recent architecture is the use of certain new materials, or unconventional uses of old materials. There are a lot of young architects using rubber and plastics, using Tyvek as a finish material — very ugly materials, almost shockingly so. But somehow it leads you toward re-evaluating your thinking about how you use materials.

Robert Campbell: Frank Gehry's own house [see page 27], which I love, is exactly what you are talking about: a deliberate exposition of ugliness that became beautiful because the "ugly" materials — asphalt flooring, chainlink, corrugated metal siding — coalesced into a collage that over time came to be perceived as a new kind of beauty.

"ART PRODUCES UGLY THINGS WHICH FREQUENTLY BECOME MORE BEAUTIFUL WITH TIME. FASHION, ON THE OTHER HAND, PRODUCES BEAUTIFUL THINGS WHICH ALWAYS BECOME UGLY WITH TIME." —JEAN COCTEAU

Michael Hays: Someone once said that the response to the beautiful is "Wow!... *Huh*?" And the response to the ugly is "Huh?... *Wow*!" It suggests somehow that the ugly is a defense against the spectacular or the too-easy "wow."

Deborah Weisgall: The ugly pushes our notion of what might or might not be beautiful. The beginning of Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony" could be described as ugly. It is chaotic — magnificently ugly. You have to work very hard to make sense out of it, and then whether or not it becomes beautiful is not relevant. It finally achieves coherence. It makes sense. So what is ugly? Is it the very 20th-century idea of pushing the boundaries? Or is it something that is so completely inharmonious that we can't make sense out of it?

Hansy Better: The inharmonious is definitely part of it. Ugly is often related to revulsion, especially when we're

good chance that there's something significant going on. It's what we understand too easily that loses our interest.

Louise Sacco: The ugly assaults you in a way that makes you feel "something's wrong here," which forces you to think more deeply.

Robert Campbell: I think there's no such thing as beautiful or ugly outside of a cultural and social context. For me, the ugliest building in Boston has always been One Boston Place, the Boston Company building, because it is so unbelievably anti-human. But a good building can also be an ugly building. It can be creative and interesting and powerful. Boston City Hall is always going to be considered an ugly building, because people see it as authoritarian and aggressive. But it is an undeniably good building.

Michael Hays: The ugly is most useful when it puts you on the path toward an

Michael Hays: Looking back in history, Adolf Loos' houses were also regarded as ugly. Now they look very clean and pure. But I think Gehry's Santa Monica house is an important example of the ugly in our own time. It broke the rules and pushed forward some very advanced compositional techniques, which resulted in a project that was fresh, inventive, daring. Another example is the new Seattle library. There's something ugly about that building in its very form, its very shape. Perhaps it's only momentarily ugly, because it is already appearing in commercials and advertising, so its ugliness is already waning in favor of its consumer value. But because it's ugly, you start thinking about it and you can see how it's trying to accommodate certain programmatic juxtapositions. It's trying to use the structural wrapper in a new way. So in the sense that it is trying to push forward new techniques, it's very much like the Gehry house.

Louise Sacco: Do all architects then have a

defense if someone calls their work ugly? "I'm pushing, I'm doing something new."

Deborah Weisgall: Every artist has that defense.

Michael Hays: Then who gets to decide if it's ugly? I would propose just for discussion that individuals don't get to decide if something is ugly. The creator doesn't get to decide, but neither does the audience. A collective debate like this one about what's ugly, and what's ugly-good and what's ugly-bad, or what's ugly because it's inadequate and what's ugly because it pushes forward, raises very difficult issues that you don't decide on once and for all.

Hansy Better: But, generally speaking, if an architect's work is labeled "ugly," that is the beginning of the end of that architect, or at least the end of that project. Aiming for ugliness is one thing; it can raise consciousness or lead toward a fresh way of thinking, which could be healthy, especially for a young architect. But having your work critically judged "ugly" is a position no one wants to be in.

Deborah Weisgall: I wonder if ugliness can confer a kind of freedom. I'm working on a novel that has George Eliot as one of the characters. As I started to research Eliot, I discovered that her ugliness was the burden she bore — and talked about — throughout life. She was *really* inharmonious. But because of this, she had the chance to take her mind in directions where no English novelist had gone, not even Dickens. Her ugliness put her completely beyond the sexual pale; a conventional gentleman could not bring himself to marry her — although she did live for 25 years with a marvelous man, who could not divorce his wife. He, by the way, was also considered ugly. Physical ugliness had a moral component; there was the assumption that an ugly woman lacked the emotional capacity to experience tender feelings — love, specifically — although she could understand them. Think about Cyrano.

But Eliot made her heroines beautiful, and her beautiful characters have to deal with the consequences — and sometimes the market value — of their beauty. The 1850s were a different time, but in some ways I think the conventions of physical beauty are still very strong.

Elizabeth Padjen: Daphne Merkin wrote an essay recently in *The New York Times Magazine* about the French concept of *jolie laide,* which means, literally, "pretty ugly" — not pretty as an intensifier, as in "really ugly," but referring to a kind of beauty that can be found in ugly underpinnings: pretty *and* ugly. It's usually applied to women; Angelica Huston and Paloma Picasso are sometimes cited as examples. Merkin makes the point that this is a European concept; Americans typically don't go for unconventional beauty. The implication is that a culture that can accept the concept of the *jolie laide* is searching for something that has greater meaning and authenticity and importance.

Louise Sacco: Conventions of physiognomy are complicated; they can cause a lot of suffering. Nowadays, if a kid has a nose that's less than perfect or ears that stick out, we fix them; you're a negligent parent if you don't. We don't accommodate imperfections that we think can and should be fixed. Which means that we don't accommodate deviations from a limited standard of beauty.

Elizabeth Padjen: And that in turn relates to the ways in which we conceptually connect ugliness with authenticity. *The Times* ran a story a few months ago about character actors, who typically are not as attractive as stars. To some degree, the more ordinary or the odder their appearance, the more compelling their performance — they seem more "real."

Michael Hays: Beauty in our own time has close ties with consumer culture and advertisement and branding. And in a certain sense, beauty is vulgarly artificial. But there is an interesting connection between the ugly and the ordinary; Venturi and Scott Brown were perhaps the first to address it explicitly in architecture. The ugly and ordinary became the way to negate the modern avant-garde and to move beyond it; in a way, the avant-garde turned against the avant-garde. One dimension we haven't talked about is that the ugly sometimes appears as an unresolved residue of some social impulse — a need for communication, or for infrastructure, or for new programs — something that refuses to be aestheticized, that refuses to become beautiful in a conventional way. At times, the ugly is a sure sign of a social demand that cannot yet be aesthetically reconciled.

Elizabeth Padjen: It's particularly obvious in popular culture — certain groups stake out a territory of ugliness, to distance themselves from the mainstream. Grunge and hip-hop are examples. And it works, until popular culture catches up and absorbs it.

Dan Monroe: You could even argue that that process, that kind of succession, is the history of art and architecture: Commonly understood conventions develop, then someone breaks the rules and creates something no one really understands. At that point, it might simply die. But if people come to understand and adopt it, it becomes a new standard for beauty. And then the cycle repeats. But we really do have to recognize that we're locked into a time and place and cultural context. We have to recognize that, while this whole conversation may make sense in the context of Western art and architecture, it might not make sense in the context of Chinese culture, for example.

Deborah Weisgall: What would be the difference?

Dan Monroe: Different values. In the West, in the 18th century, for example, people believed that representation was essential to art and art's relationship to nature. Representation in classical Chinese art was consigned to a lower order. People who were accomplished in perspective and representational landscape art were not considered very good artists; the sense was that anybody could do that. The Chinese believed that real talent was the ability to create art that conveyed the feelings and the relationships one has with a place or a scene. We need to be somewhat humble in recognizing that we may be very sophisticated in one context, yet incredibly uninformed in another when we talk about these ideas. What is most interesting to us are those things that jump out at us, that break the rules.

Hansy Better: I think breaking the rules is an essential part of ugliness — more important than the connection of ugliness to authenticity that we were talking about earlier. Ugliness is a form of protest. In my firm, we often say that we try to aim for ugliness. I don't really think too much about exploring or exposing authenticity, whether it's in a material or a process. I do think about protest — protesting certain value judgments, protesting what we see in the magazines, protesting the fascination with surface and ornament.

Robert Campbell: The artist as renegade, especially as renegade genius, is an enduring image in Western art. There are many cultures and traditions where the renegade artist has no role at all. But renegade architecture is somewhat different; for one thing, a building quickly outlives the moment when it's so confrontational.

Michael Hays: I think Hansy is exactly right about the role of protest. But it is very hard to make architecture that protests, simply because buildings are very expensive and very public; I suppose you might say that's true of film, too — it's very hard to create protest through an ugly film for similar reasons. It's relatively easy to make a painting or to compose a piece of music that challenges our conventions; the materials are comparatively cheap.

Elizabeth Padjen: Do those of you who are educators detect among students any awareness of these issues of ugliness? Is there any discussion of the ugly?

Hansy Better: I've heard that Lebbeus Woods proposed the idea of designing a "city of murder," for which he asked his Harvard students to design something ugly, something undesirable, the idea being that through examining what you wouldn't want, you eliminate a series of bad decisions and arrive at something more desirable. I don't think students today aim for ugliness. They aim for the grotesque, meaning exaggeration or distortion of form.

Michael Hays: We don't hear the word "ugly" much in school. I think most students are trying to figure out ways to make an architecture that's adequate to consumer culture. They're conscious of branding and marketing, and they're trying to work smoothly within the system, as opposed to protesting it. I'd say that's the majority. There is also a much more savvy kind of student who knows the rules of taste and knows just where to tweak them, to push the edges. Those students seem to be working with issues of materials, and extreme urban and landscape conditions. There's one more tendency, which is perhaps the most interesting and the most rare, which is students looking at the organizational patterns of conditions that are primarily socially or economically driven, in places such as Lagos and China. But a discussion of Lagos would really push the vocabulary of ugliness into another discussion altogether.

Dan Monroe: I'm not sure that ugliness that comes out of protest actually ends up being all that interesting or even particularly influential. Usually what happens is that a whole set of ideas and values that exist outside the framework of accepted convention drives the creation of something new that is initially perceived as ugly — that's a much richer, more engaging kind of ugliness.

Michael Hays: Protest isn't necessarily simply reactive. Protest can be propositional. Russian constructivism, for example, was not just a reaction. It was a proposal for a new world, and in that sense, it was a protest.

Deborah Weisgall: And then there's the Schoenberg model of protest, which came from his perception that the possibilities for conventional tonal structures were exhausted; he believed, at least for himself, that there was nothing more to be done.

Robert Campbell: That's very different from breaking some of the rules, where the strength of the new work comes from its tension with the old. Schoenberg threw out the old and started over with completely new rules.

Hansy Better: That's an example of a conscious, or maybe self-conscious, effort to write a new chapter in the history books.

Elizabeth Padjen: Robert, you wrote recently about the University of Virginia, where most of the faculty and the alumni consider some proposed new buildings to be ugly, while the architecture faculty argued that more traditional work would be boring — ugly in its own way.

Robert Campbell: I think this gap between the architectural subculture and the taste of the larger world is the biggest issue in architecture today. For example, the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh [see page 30] won the 2005 Stirling prize as the best British building of the year. Meanwhile, Channel 4 in London is running a television program called *Demolition* in which they're asking everyone in Britain to vote on the most hated and horrible buildings in the country. The Scottish Parliament made the list of the 12 finalists. The late Enric Miralles, the building's architect, said that he wanted to make a building that would be wholly original, that would not have any associations with the past; he was throwing out all the rules and starting over again. Of course, it's impossible for a building to avoid associations. I find that the most interesting work comes not from throwing out all the rules, but from innovating at the edge of a tradition and moving beyond it. I don't know how an architect is supposed to practice in the absence of any kind of consensus about what's good and what's bad.

Elizabeth Padjen: Let alone any consensus about what's beautiful and what's ugly. Louise, was there ever a chance that your institution would be called the Museum of Ugly Art?

Louise Sacco: No.

Elizabeth Padjen: What does the difference between "bad" and "ugly" mean to MOBA?

Louise Sacco: It's the same as the difference between "fine" and "beautiful." Does the Museum of Fine Arts have only objects that are beautiful? No, it doesn't. It's the same with us. What makes some pieces bad? Sometimes it's that the creators had no control over what they were doing. They couldn't possibly manage what they were attempting. Sometimes it's someone who has technical skill and talent and who tries to push some limit

in some direction and it just doesn't work out. And generally they know it didn't work out. Sometimes it just baffles us: Why would someone with this much talent create this piece? But ugly has never been a criterion. It's never the way we've described anything, although certainly we have ugly pieces in our collection. On a percentage basis, we probably don't have many more than the MFA.

Robert Campbell: My brother once said about some early 19th-century poet, "You know, it takes quite a lot of talent to be a really bad poet."

Elizabeth Padjen: So what's the measure of a successful bad artist? Do they get worse or do they get better?

Louise Sacco: I don't know. But we don't think the opposite of bad is good. We reject work because it's boring.

Michael Hays: But there's also the question of intention. I looked at the MOBA website, with these questions in mind. At first I decided that the provocation of some of the paintings was accidental in the way that the Old Man in the Mountain just happened to look like an old man in the mountain. But then the question becomes where does the bad-ness or the ugly come from? Does it reside in the object? It doesn't completely reside in the audience. It doesn't completely reside in the creator. Does it matter whether the object is created by an expert or a naïf? What does matter — and this is more significant in architecture than in music or painting — is how the object is received *by the collective* once it becomes public.

Deborah Weisgall: That's why Robert likes architects who work on the edge. Because they're aware of the context and they're consciously trying to make connections.

Robert Campbell: It's impossible to invent meaningfully in the absence of conventions. Another good example of that would be Frank Gehry's Experience Music Project in Seattle. You may like it, you may not like it, but is it meaningful?

Elizabeth Padjen: Michael's notion of the collective passing judgment accommodates that kind of question. The collective can wrestle with ideas and values that are not necessarily present in the object or the building, or even intended by the creator. Some people might look at an SUV and say it's ugly because they're associating it with various values, when the object itself might be extremely well-designed by other measures. But judgment by the collective is also an argument for the educated citizen. Everybody talks about ugliness, but your response to the ugly changes with education.

Dan Monroe: Are you talking about Elvis paintings on velvet?

Elizabeth Padjen: It's an interesting question. If you presented one to someone in another country, another culture, where people knew nothing about paintings on velvet or Elvis, what would the reaction be? Here's another example — I'll confess it here and now: Throughout my teenage years, until I studied art history, I thought Trinity Church was the ugliest thing I had ever seen, simply hideous.

Deborah Weisgall: I saw Trinity Church for the first time when I was 16. I come from a Europhilic tradition, and I thought it was a cheap American knock-off of a Romanesque church. Like Elizabeth, I didn't begin to understand it until later. That came with education, but it also took familiarity, which is an important aspect of the transformation of the ugly. There's that moment when, because you've seen it enough and thought about it enough, something transmutes from the inept and ugly into something that is really rich, that makes you want to look at it.

Robert Campbell: One reason that you had those reactions to Trinity may have been that it is in fact awkward in some ways. But it may have also had something to do with the cultural context of that time. When I was growing up there were three styles: Early American; Ugly Victorian; and Sterile Modern.

Elizabeth Padjen: Right. And a New England subset of Ugly Victorian was White Elephant, which referred to all the Shingle Style houses. Now that we've all been educated about Victorian and Shingle Style architecture, they're everywhere, in every new subdivision.

Robert Campbell: But the question of education and understanding is important. I don't understand modern music. It sounds to me like people repairing radiators. Because I have no idea what's going on, because it's something incomprehensible, it is ugly. But I think architecture is somewhat different. Even people who don't have any special design education can perceive an order in it that is not apparent, say, in 12-tone music.

Elizabeth Padjen: So we assume that if Robert Campbell, the musical naïf,

"THERE IS NOTHING IN MACHINERY, THERE IS NOTHING IN EMBANKMENTS AND RAILWAYS AND IRON BRIDGES AND ENGINEERING DEVICES TO OBLIGE THEM TO BE UGLY. UGLINESS IS THE MEASURE OF IMPERFECTION." —H. G. WELLS

immersed himself in the study of music, his reaction to 12-tone music would change.

Deborah Weisgall: It might not. My husband and I both grew up in musical households; my father was a composer, my husband studied composition. I have asked him to go to James Levine's Schoenberg performances with the Boston Symphony, and he refuses. He understands the music absolutely — its structure, its history, its significance. But he will not go. Schoenberg took an almost mathematical idea: to work with rows of 12 tones, which you arranged in different combinations. There have always been other cultures with other modes of making music, other harmonic structures. But because a certain kind of harmonic structure was magnificently developed in one pretty small part of Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, it seems to many people as though there's no other way to go, that all alternatives are ugly. Much of 20th-century music has acquired an undeserved reputation for being ugly: Stravinsky, Bartók, even some Ravel. Schoenberg took an extreme position, which my husband says led music away from the ear, and many composers followed him. I grew up listening to my father wrestling with those 12-tone rows, and I think some atonal music is profoundly exciting — and not at all ugly. But I do not think that Schoenberg's influence has been altogether fruitful. Maybe it's because music isn't like painting: you can't look at it, turn away, and come back; you can't let it sneak up on you. And sometimes I wonder what kids who are steeped in the loud and layered dissonances of rock would think if they listened to Schoenberg.

Dan Monroe: Understanding is tricky as a determinant of appreciation. You can understand and not appreciate. Whether it's music or anything else — if it's not satisfying or enriching you in ways other than simple "understanding," you won't appreciate it with the same intensity as a work of art or architecture that generates a complex emotional and intellectual response.

Robert Campbell: To take another example from a field I know better than music, I can tell you that I'm never going to read *Finnegan's Wake*. There are James Joyce clubs where members devote lifetimes to reading it. Joyce, perhaps like Schoenberg, leaped too far from tradition to have a real influence on the mainstream.

Hansy Better: I also think we often have a very limited notion of what constitutes education. Cultural traditions are a kind of education, too.

Louise Sacco: The Museum of Bad Art has had a lot of experience with people who know nothing about art. Some art educators have developed a program in which they bring a group of high school students to our museum and then take them to the MFA. MOBA somehow frees kids to laugh and point, to have their own opinions and argue about things. They then take that experience to the MFA, where they might otherwise feel intimidated, or feel that there is a "correct" response. Maybe the ugly plays a similar role in our culture. It frees us, and by freeing us, it opens us up to new ideas and directions. ■

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ROGUES' GALLERY

Sometimes the ugly duckling is really a swan, sometimes it's just an ugly duck

By William Morgan

In 1968, as a student at Columbia, I heard Sir John Summerson lecture on Victorian architecture. The compleat classicist, he laced his exposition with words like "failure," "corrupt," and "tormenting"; his essay on William Butterfield in *Heavenly Mansions* was titled "The Glory of Ugliness." Later, when I studied at Oxford, I heard of the apocryphal club committed to tearing down Butterfield's Keble College, wherein members pledged to remove a brick every time they passed the college until the walls tumbled.

For people of Summerson's generation, "Victorian" meant hostile, repulsive, even threatening — in a word, ugly. Who does not recall when the term itself was justification enough for demolition? Untold numbers of mansards, dead ringers for Edward Hopper's *House by the Railroad* or a Charles Addams house in *The New Yorker*, were torn down in our home towns without so much as a whimper of protest.

One childhood memory is of driving into Philadelphia past Frank Furness' soot-blackened masterpiece, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; my mother ritually bemoaned its ugliness and voiced her hope that it would be soon torn down. Furness' Provident Bank was razed by the National Park Service — its death warrant being that its ugly visage was too close to Independence Hall. Philadelphia City Hall itself, an over-the-top Gilded Age icon in the manner of the Paris Opera, was identified as a symbol of corruption by Democratic reformers who pledged to tear it down.

Closer to Boston, there was Harvard's willful neglect of Memorial Hall by an avowedly anti-Victorian university president, while Richard Morris Hunt's old Fogg was razed for the sin of being Beaux Arts. (It is ironic that Le Corbusier's Carpenter Center was built during Memorial Hall's eclipse and near demise. Which one is the ugly duckling now?)

Obviously, one generation's wart is another's beauty mark, and finding the ugly in Victorian architecture is all too easy. Is the question of ugly really one of taste? Were there Athenians who found the highly polychromed Parthenon tacky? Thomas Jefferson was harshly critical of the public buildings of Williamsburg, yet 150 years later, untold millions were spent to restore and even reconstruct them. Since it takes only a Robert Venturi to transform kitsch like Las Vegas into high art, or a Prince Charles to do the reverse, we are left to wonder if any works of architecture are intrinsically, immutably, intractably ugly.

It used to be that we needed a guide — Alberti, Ruskin, Gropius — to help us make the right determinations. We have entered a new era when architecture is not judged by the canons of the past. Rather, we judge buildings almost solely by their celebrity curb appeal. During the Bicentennial, AIA members voted for the best American building; the easy winner was Jefferson's University of Virginia, with Richardson's Trinity Church second. A recent poll in Britain ranked Norman Foster's phallic Swiss Re Headquarters (known as the Gherkin) as the best British building of all time; a similar national referendum just 10 years ago gave the nod to Durham Cathedral.

Compared to the current let's-be-ugly-for-the-sake-of-ugliness designers (Zaha Hadid?), Butterfield at least ladled out his ration of ugliness with a sense of appropriate purpose.

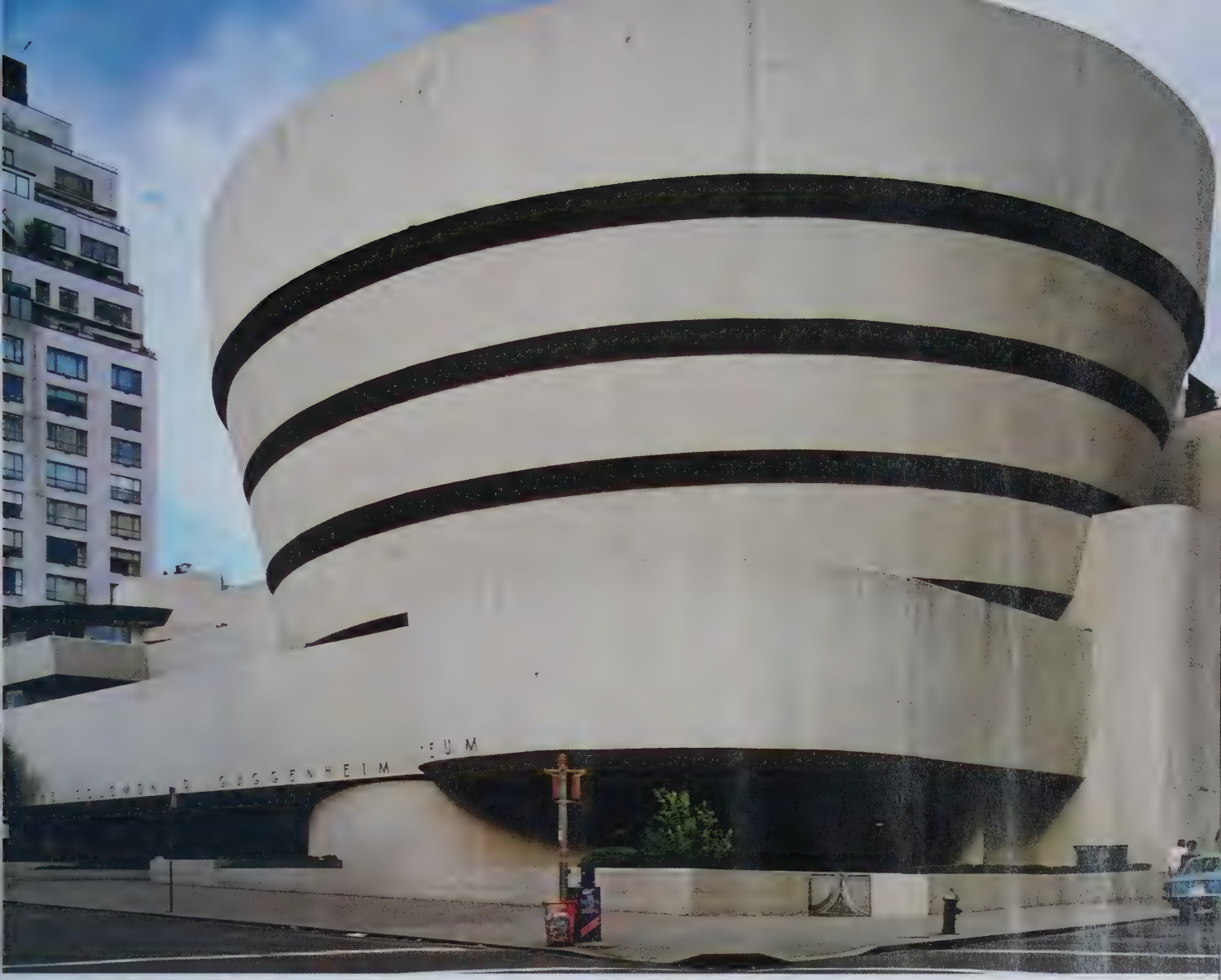
William Morgan is a writer and architectural historian in Providence, Rhode Island.

The Deco Spaceship

(Top) Frank Lloyd Wright's 1959 Guggenheim Museum is today treated with reverence, but half a century ago it was "a pot-bellied strumpet selling her wares on 5th Avenue." Columbia preservation professor Charles Peterson called it a "pile of dirty dishes stacked at the edge of Central Park."

Radical Chic

(Right) In a kind of reverse snobbery, Frank Gehry elevated everyday materials — plywood, corrugated metal, chainlink — to trendiness in his own 1978 house in Santa Monica, California, thus deconstructing a nondescript Dutch Colonial into ugliness and adding a chapter to the history books.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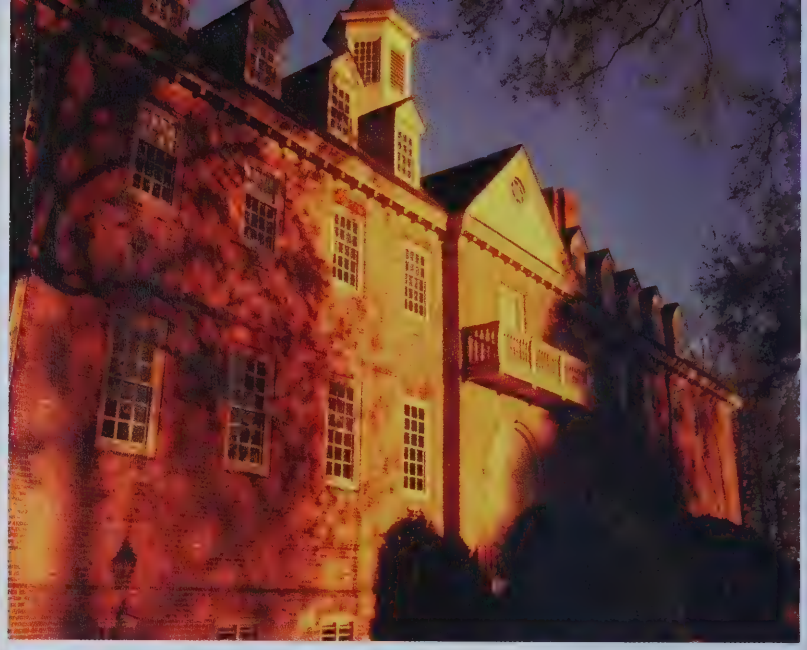


The Disneyfication of History

(Above) Thomas Jefferson referred to the public buildings of Williamsburg, Virginia, including the College of William and Mary, as "rude, mis-shapen piles, which, but they have roofs, would be mistaken for brick-kilns." Yet such sentiments seem tame set against the destruction of several hundred structures by Colonial Williamsburg in its desire to recreate a sanitized 18th-century past. The College's 1695 Wren Building (above), attributed to Christopher Wren, is actually in its fifth incarnation.

Spirited Away

(Left) The vigorous forms of Frank Furness' Provident Bank in Philadelphia captured the spirit of America at the time of the nation's Centennial but were demolished a century later, spirit apparently being subject to fashion like anything else. The nearby Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, fared better and was restored to its glory in time for the Bicentennial. (Bottom)

The Ultimate Erector Set

(Top) The Pompidou Center ("Beaubourg") by Piano + Rogers has always been popular with the public, but when it opened in 1977, the reaction among architectural critics ranged from confused ("strangest building of the year") to openly hostile ("hideous"). Peter Cook, the old Archigrammer, called Beaubourg a "well-equipped hangar."

Fahrenheit 451: The Sequel

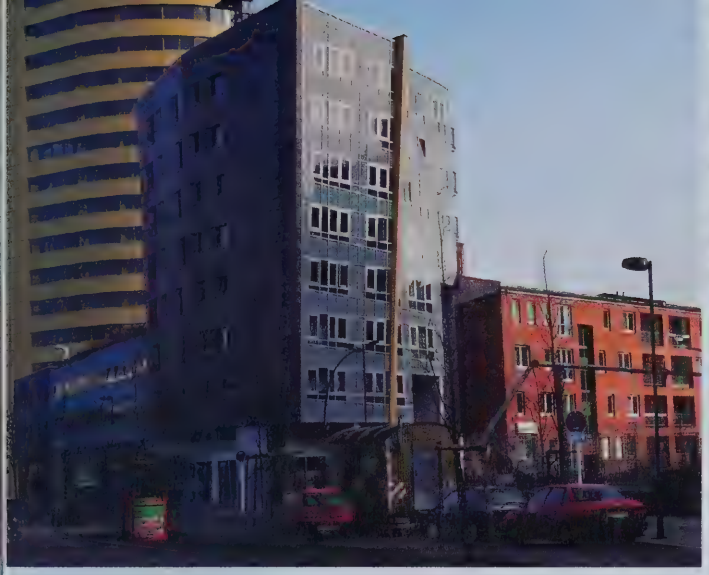
(Above) The overly-twee-ness of New Urbanism, as in this local example at Mashpee Common on Cape Cod, is repellent, if not downright threatening. The movement's guru Andres Duany improbably claims that "We New Urbanists are allergic to nostalgia"; the resulting hypoallergenic environments seem guaranteed an afterlife as futuristic movie sets.

Braveheart's Castle

(Top) The professional attacks on Enric Miralles' 2005 Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh have mainly focused on the building's nearly half-billion-dollar cost; the public, however, has been less restrained — the building was voted one of the 12 most hated buildings in Britain on the television program "Demolition." Critic Hugh Pearman called it "insanely bespoke, positively willful," and noted that the "think bubble" windows designed to aid contemplation and reduce stress "look very much like whiskey bottles."

House of Un-American Activities

(Above) The 1951 Farnsworth House by Mies van der Rohe was identified by *House Beautiful* magazine during the McCarthy era as a threat to American values — a sentiment echoed by Wright, who said, "Why do I distrust such 'internationalism' as I do communism?"



Berliner Bau Wow

(Top) Inspired by critical accolades for Zaha Hadid's 1994 residential block at Stressemannstrasse 109 in Berlin, my wife, son, and I spent an afternoon trying to find this less-than-inspiring tortured cube, and when we did, they were incredulous: *Why* were we here?

Still Ugly After All These Years

(Right) Boston's International Place was, and is, an enormous architectural joke, which the ever-suave Philip Johnson was able to masquerade as style ("I am serious, but playfulness is part of my art"). The authors of the *AIA Guide to Boston* were not amused, writing, "The façade of endlessly repeated Palladian windows with false mirror-glass arched tops is a travesty of the form."

Brutalist or Just Plain Brutal?

(Bottom) Defining ugly as hostile, we include Paul Rudolph's 1962 Art & Architecture Building at Yale. One man's hostility is another's heroicism: Vincent Scully cast it in a genealogy including the ancient Greeks and Le Corbusier, characterized as "that sculptural embodiment of human force and action." Not long thereafter the building was set afire by angry students — that's hostility.

Paris on the Potomac

(Top) Harry Truman referred to A.B. Mullett's Executive Office Building (the former State, War & Navy Building, completed in 1888) as "the greatest monstrosity in America," echoing Henry Adams' comment that it was "Mr. Mullett's architectural infant asylum."

One Million Pounds of Copper

(Above) The most provocative and thoughtful new building in San Francisco in recent decades, the new de Young Museum by Herzog & de Meuron is an easy target for local wags: "If they plant ivy right now, it will grow fast enough to cover the de Young before anyone notices how ugly it is."

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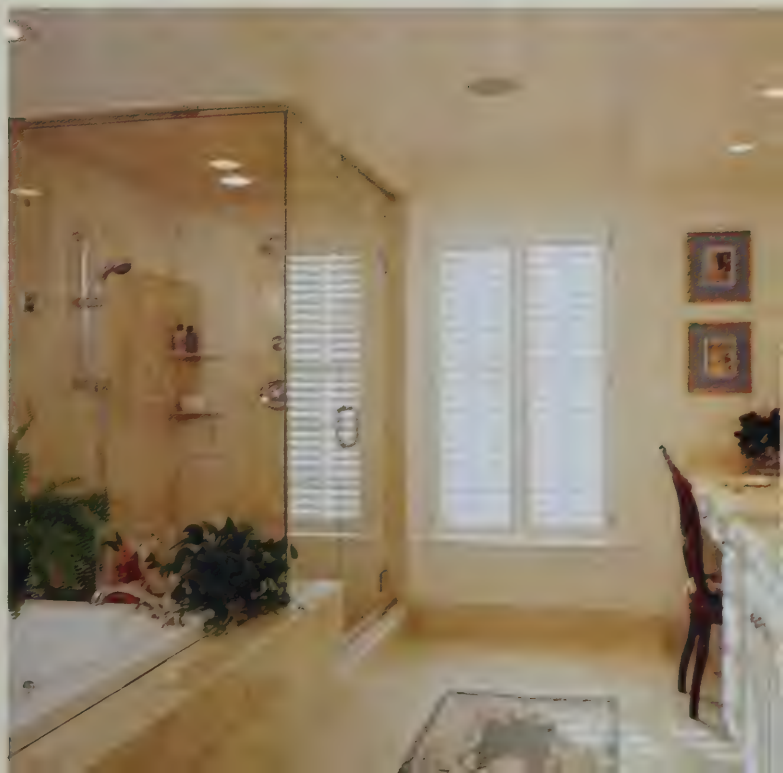

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In Defense of One Western Avenue

Why the building everyone loves to hate is good for you

By George Thrush FAIA

Let's face it. The Harvard graduate student dormitory along the Charles River known as One Western Avenue is an almost uniquely reviled building. Since its completion a few years ago, it has been pilloried by neighbors, activists, critics, and even architects.

So why is the reaction to One Western Avenue so universally negative? My own unscientific polling reveals a shocking level of what might charitably be called reactionary aesthetic conservatism, or worse, a kind of deep cultural pessimism. Among my neighbors in Cambridgeport (just across the river from the building), the negative reaction is nearly unanimous. Mind you, these folks are the sort who would never express a negative thought

PHOTOS: © MICHAEL MORAN.

Opposite and left: One Western Avenue, Harvard University (2003). Architect: Machado and Silvetti Associates, Boston.

Why does our forward-looking community remain so addicted to the image of the past? Why is the architecture of the Victorian era so beloved at the expense of the work of our own time?

about modern painting or music, or performance art, or any other such evidence of cultural experimentation for fear of being labeled "conservative." But when it comes to architecture, they seem to feel that the stakes are higher; after all, buildings are continuous performances in a way that Philip Glass symphonies or Robert Wilson plays are not. And so the architectural tastes of many of my fellow citizens tend toward the Kenny-G-like stylings of the Genzyme faux-cathedral of biotech adjacent to One Western Avenue, designed by the Cambridge firm ARC.

It is a bizarre situation that in this Blue-est of Blue States, in the heart of world-altering technological innovation in biotechnology and pharmaceuticals and computing, that the architectural taste of the region be so retrograde. Obviously there are exceptions, such as the newer Genzyme building in East Cambridge, the Stata Center at MIT, and MIT's "sponge" — the Simmons Hall dormitory. But these largely isolated examples (and without residential neighbors, they are indeed literally isolated) are not examples of buildings or imagery with which people in Boston or Cambridge can apparently identify. And why not? Why does our forward-looking community remain so addicted to the image of the past? Why is the architecture of the Victorian era so beloved at the expense of the work of our own time?

Some possible answers bear directly on a more detailed review of this complex and challenging building. One Western Avenue is a relentlessly modern composition. It is unapologetic about its austerity (as are building budgets and construction materials and methods, by the way). Composed of rectilinear bars that make as little distinction as possible between their vertical and horizontal use, the building is quite stark. Though the building skin is made of brick, it deploys brick in completely atypical ways to create depth and shadow on the lower levels and decorative patterns above. These patterns make a two-dimensional reference to the more traditional three-dimensional relief found in Harvard's older buildings. The vertical bar (or tower) does not achieve the iconic character of other Harvard buildings, but that is also clearly not the primary objective of the work. This is an ambitious project that seeks to create a portal to the new campus. That it is not the portal that Harvard's neighbors, or Bostonians in general, would have chosen could still prove a devastating political error. Nevertheless, this is a building that shows the way to a future.

Ah, the future. This is the second reason that One Western Avenue has been so savaged. This building announces, celebrates, and embraces the future. How well it does so is open to some debate. The building has no doubt failed to perform a key political act, namely securing a modern future for the new Harvard in Allston. And the building's negative press has since fed on itself to the point that One Western Avenue is now seen as a serious cautionary (and very negative) example of how things might go wrong in the high stakes world of Harvard's institutional planning for its expansion. Politically, One Western Avenue has been a fiasco.

And to be sure, architects who seek to do work on significant public buildings cannot assume that the criteria for evaluation of that work will exclude the political. It comes with the territory, and the possibility of public rejection is simply another of the many anxieties that accompany aesthetic and creative ambition. But just because political concerns are part of the complex series of issues that engage all serious architects doesn't mean that they are the only ones that matter. Certainly architects from Michelangelo and Bernini to Thom Mayne and Rem Koolhaas have navigated the political issues of the day while also creating works of lasting architectural importance.

But this problem with the perception of the building is interesting because Harvard and Allston are entirely about the future: the future of the World's Greatest University; the future of the city; and the future of biotechnology and scientific invention. Yet, unlike my hometown of Chicago, which continues to act as though her future will be greater than her past, Boston and Cambridge continue to imagine that their best days are behind them. This is a very odd sensibility with which to move forward, and this ambivalence is going to continue to give us problems in deciding what the future should look like.

Ironically, this architectural task of trying to re-connect modern architecture meaningfully with the past couldn't fall to more accomplished architects than the building's designers, Rodolfo Machado and Jorge Silvetti. I often wonder if One Western Avenue's many detractors are aware that many leading architects around the world consider Machado and Silvetti to be the most important, skilled, and influential architects in Boston, followed perhaps by Office dA. The firm has so influenced a generation of practitioners throughout Boston and the rest of the country that it wouldn't be an exaggeration to refer to a "school of Machado and Silvetti," much as the term is used to describe the circles of influence around master painters.

The "Boston Architecture" of the late 1980s and 1990s that has become the house style of the many Boston firms that employ and export it throughout the country owes its birth to a conflation of the Cornell School (where one of the critical transformations of postwar, High Modern architecture occurred in the 1970s), represented locally by Fred Koetter and Mike Dennis, with, yes, Machado and Silvetti. This marriage of figure/ground-driven urban design with mannerist manipulations of more traditional (and often brick) architecture tropes has become the style of

choice for our area's hospitals, dormitories, libraries, and even office buildings.

At One Western Avenue, Machado and Silvetti simply continued their mannerist distortion of this language beyond what their public audience could handle. There is the naturalistic mural of clouds or water facing the river, the faceted soffit underneath the great bridge that opens the courtyard to the river, and the woven patterns of low building with high, and light brick with dark. Architecturally, there is a lot going on at One Western Avenue.

But there is also a great deal that ties it to our past. The building does have a courtyard facing the river (like other Harvard dormitories) after all. It is made of brick. It uses its lower parts to define the street. It meets one of the cardinal responsibilities of a good urban building in that one can easily imagine many ways in which it not only works well with the adjoining existing buildings, but could also work well with many different ones in the future. Can you say that about the Genzyme building next door?

How is it possible that in a hotbed of progressivism, the sophisticated work of one of the world's best firms is rejected completely out-of-hand? By any rational measure, One Western Avenue is a solid piece of urban design, upon which one can easily imagine more new blocks of the new university being modeled. Perhaps what has really happened is that we have allowed our hyperactive political antennae to supersede our aesthetic judgment. The arguments against One Western Avenue, after all, are really echoes of the "we shall not be moved" protests against Peabody Terrace and the perceived arrogance of architecture and institutions against "the people" in the 1960s.

In a final irony, Rodolfo Machado and Jorge Silvetti are themselves children of Berkeley, circa 1968, and all of the presumed political efficacy that was imagined for architecture in those heady times. But we have them to thank for working to separate that kind of political determinism from architectural discourse in the intervening decades and replacing it with an architecture about realism and language. The unique choices for materials, surfaces, and imagery that one finds in their work is a great step forward from those far less interesting days.

And perhaps an ambitious society must risk building the occasional building it doesn't love in order to aspire to a more interesting and inventive future. One Western Avenue isn't Machado and Silvetti's best building. Their new Getty Villa in Malibu, California, is truly extraordinary, as are their smaller local buildings like the Allston Public Library and the new Provincetown Art Association and Museum. They have done better work, but their ambition in this building is clear: to invent new ways of expressing the modern world against a long history of architecture and urbanism. The alternative, reproducing the image of a past that often bears no relation to our time, doesn't seem very promising. ■

George Thrush FAIA is director of the School of Architecture at Northeastern University.

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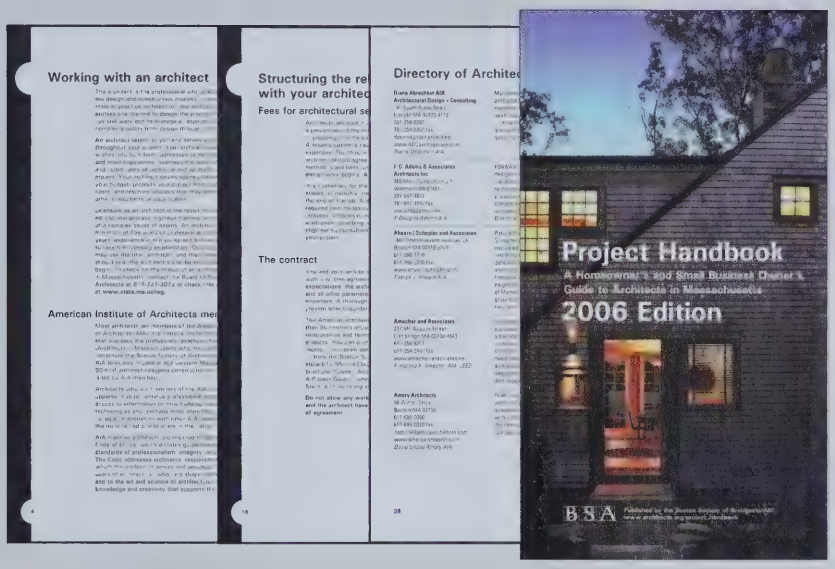

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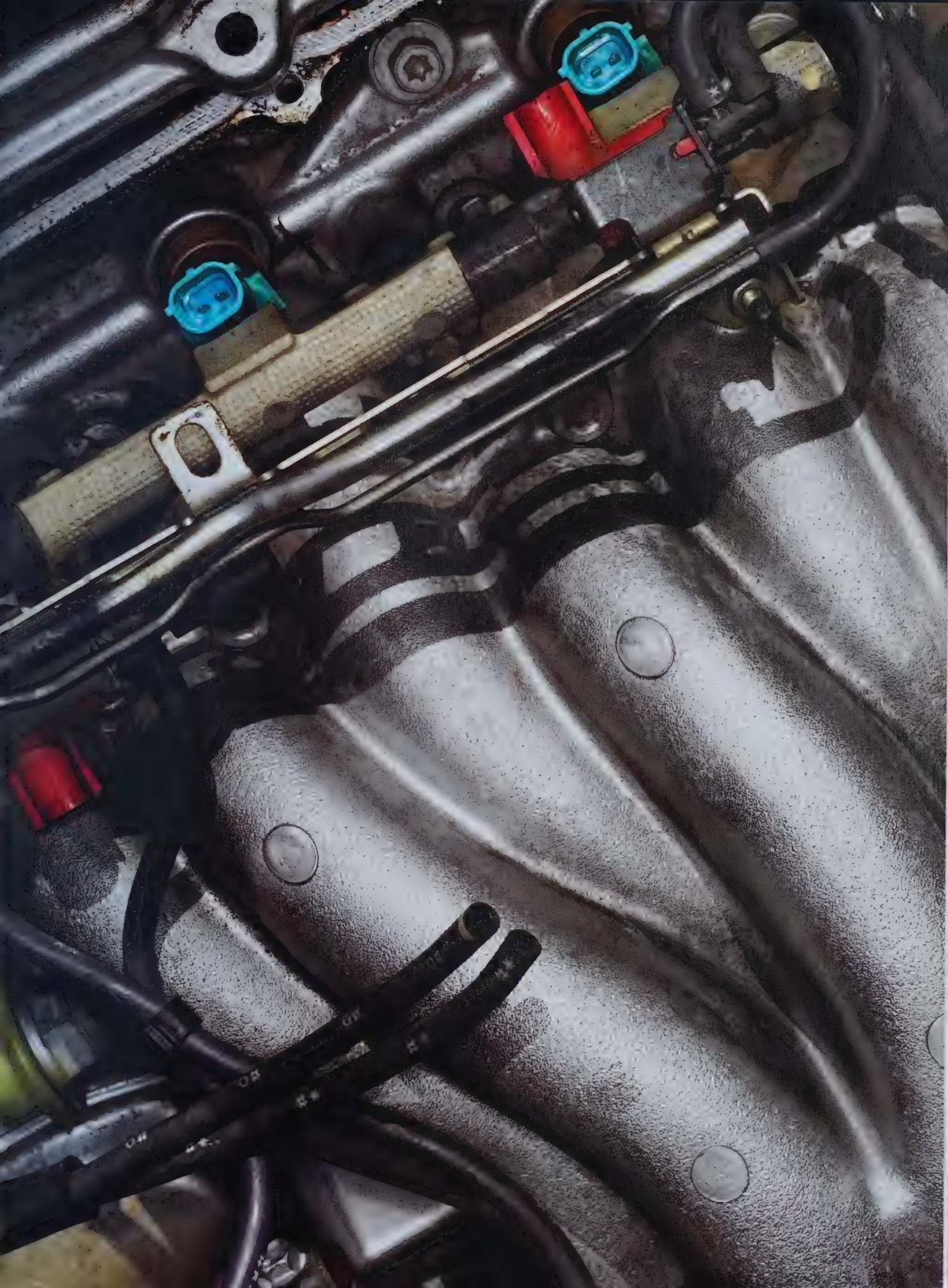
LOVE AND THE MACHINE

Or, the Importance of Corinthian Leather By Willy Sclarsic AIA

It's not easy to love a machine. One can appreciate the performance of a machine, but when people have love affairs with their machines, it's usually the non-machine persona that they love: the style and shape of the body; the finish; the chrome; the appointments of the interior; the Corinthian leather. It is rarely the design of the carburetor.

In the 20th century, those in the business of producing buildings embraced the International Style's aesthetic of building as machine. From the owners' point of view, the International Style was significantly less expensive than traditional "historical" styles. Form, decoration, and ornamentation were eliminated as unnecessary and unwanted, and buildings were reduced to their most basic functional and utilitarian expressions. In some cases,



with superior architectural skills, the results were exceptional. In most cases, when financial returns became the measure of the performance of the architectural machine, the results devolved into undistinguished, mundane, and often ugly buildings. As the non-machine elements of buildings were eliminated and only the architectural machine remained, little was left for people to love. Architects were invariably drawn, or possibly trapped, by these financially driven aesthetics and came to accept and champion them. Through this process, they disconnected their work from public appreciation and established a cult of ugliness, rationalized by financial imperatives.

The architectural machine — as expressed by the ribbon-windowed box, for office use, and the punched-windowed box, for residential use — became ubiquitous. The occupants of these buildings, obliged to work and live in buildings whose design was indifferent to their aesthetic senses, in turn became indifferent to the architecture and learned to accept it as background "wallpaper." They did not hate this architecture; they simply ignored it. Although the amenities that were often provided with new buildings (the performance of the machine) were appreciated, there was no love for the architecture. Without love, there was no consumer demand for architecture. Without consumer demand for new architecture, there was little need for owners to respond by demanding innovative, cutting-edge design from their architects. There is no great architecture without demand, and there is no demand without great architecture.

Without consumer demand for new architecture, there was little need for owners to respond by demanding innovative, cutting-edge design from their architects.

During the past two decades, there have been some architectural attempts to reconnect with consumer aesthetics. These were often accomplished by retreating to more familiar and comfortable "historical" styles, materials, or contexts; Victorian, Georgian, and Spanish Colonial residential designs were a reaction to consumer demands and aesthetics. But, with the exception of the Postmodernism of the 1980s, there have been few attempts to reconnect with consumers through new architectural language.

Why should architects care about this issue now? There is plenty of work, the economy is strong, and architects occupy an important and secure position in the real-estate development process. Most architects are satisfied with their designs and, in most cases, so are their clients. The issue is not improving the architectural bottom line, but the fundamental nature and character of architectural practice in the evolving 21st century.

The challenge for architects in the 21st century will be to create a new architecture that will re-engage its consumers as well as its clients. For this re-engagement to be successful, architects will need to elicit a response to the architecture itself and not just to building amenities; this new architecture must reconnect with its consumers on its own merits. Simply stated, architects must deliver a product, as they did for many centuries, that is so appealing to its consumers, that buildings will again become an integral part of the common heritage rather than disposable and implodable commodities. If architects create a product that users demand — much as designers of other consumer products consistently do — and innovative design thus becomes a "demand generator," owners will respond. Architects should not underestimate the capacity of non-architects to love architecture.

In fact, developers and owners have historically readily responded to demand factors that they believe enhance marketability or profitability. Plumbing, central heating, air conditioning, elevators, fire protection, cable TV, and high-speed Internet are examples of relatively recent building improvements. These costs were absorbed into the pro-forma formula for speculative as well as institutional and corporate buildings because they were required to make buildings competitive and contemporary. Recently, "green" design has become acceptable, not only because it is good environmental policy, but also because of the belief that it improves employee productivity and therefore profitability. Innovative architectural design currently has little market value, and is often viewed by investors, lenders, and marketers as a negative, unpredictable factor. Only consumer demand can reverse this condition and restore a market value for new architecture.

This new architecture cannot be established by reverting to historical styles; it requires that architects move forward. This new architecture will need to reintroduce new, non-machine "unnecessary necessities" that transform the architectural machine into a work of architecture. It's the non-machine features that are essential for the love affair.

Some exciting buildings have recently been built that reintroduce the non-machine elements of form, color, and texture, integrating them into new materials, new technologies, and new architectural expressions. These buildings excite and engage architects as well as their owners, users, occupants, and visitors. Will these buildings be lonely exceptions or will they become the architecture of the 21st century?

In *Towards a New Architecture*, Le Corbusier observed, "there does exist this thing called Architecture, an admirable thing, the loveliest of all. A product of happy people, and a thing which in itself produces happy people. The happy towns are those which have an Architecture."

Architectural machines are not the products of happy people, nor do they produce happy people. If we are to move toward a new 21st-century architecture that will be as publicly cherished and loved as is pre-20th-century architecture, then we should agree with the proposition that engineers should design machines, and architects should design architecture. ■

Willy Sclarsic AIA is a senior vice president of Bluestone Realty LLC in Newton, Massachusetts, which owns and manages residential and commercial properties from Massachusetts to Texas. He is also co-chair of the BSA Housing Committee.

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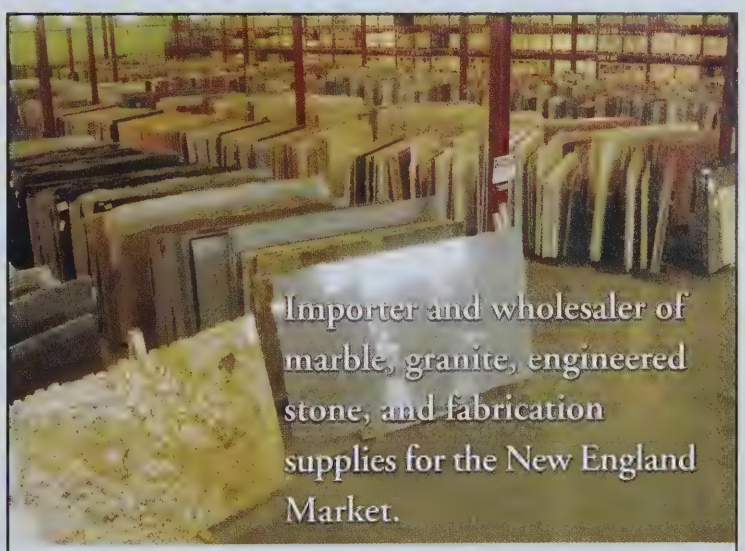

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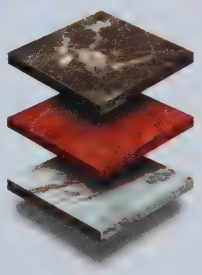

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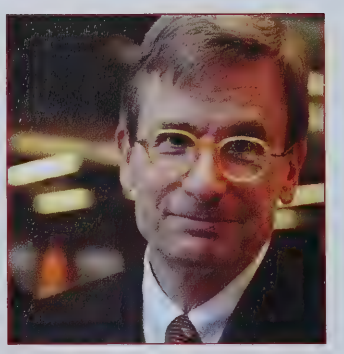
Changes in Latitudes

From New York to Miami, one man's adventures in the museum trade Terence Riley talks with Jeff Stein AIA

Terence Riley is the director of the Miami Art Museum, and was previously the Philip Johnson chief curator of architecture and design at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.



Jeff Stein AIA is the director of the architecture program at the Boston Architectural Center and is the architecture critic for *Banker & Tradesman*.

Jeff Stein: People frequently refer to you as a tastemaker. What is your reaction to that?

Terence Riley: I think tastemaking is no sin, as long as that's not what you're trying to do.

Jeff Stein: Meaning that deliberate tastemaking becomes too political?

Terence Riley: Meaning that the politics and intrigue of purposeful tastemaking can obscure the quest to identify excellence.

Jeff Stein: You seem to think a lot about certain results as byproducts of other intentions. You once said that trying to solve a technical problem in the most innovative way often creates something beautiful.

Terence Riley: The flip side of that observation is that whenever you set out to make something beautiful, you usually don't.

Opposite: Images from the Museum of Modern Art exhibition *On-Site: New Architecture in Spain*, curated by Terence Riley (on view, February 12–May 1, 2006).

On-Site
NEW ARCHITECTURE IN SPAIN

It comes down to the essence of good design: something beautiful derives from the elegance of the solution. It's a much better approach than endlessly chasing around the question of what constitutes beauty.

Jeff Stein: You have arrived at a bridging moment in your career. The Japanese have a word for it: *hashi*, meaning "the end of one thing and the beginning of another." You're coming from New York, from one of the most venerable of museums, and going to what is the capital of the Caribbean and maybe soon of the whole Western Hemisphere, Miami, to become part of a relatively young institution.

Terence Riley: It's a change in a number of ways. It's a change in scale; a change in attitude; and a change in terms of a perceived future. The Museum of Modern Art has well over 100,000 objects in its collection. Miami Art Museum has 300. MoMA has 800 employees and MAM has about 80. MoMA occupies 630,000 square feet of space; MAM has 35,000 square feet at the moment, but is on the verge of building a 125,000-square-foot museum on a new site. MoMA is 75 years old and everything I did there was building upon layers of achievement by illustrious predecessors; MAM's history is much more compressed. What's interesting is that both institutions have offered me an incredible opportunity to play a role in building not only a great work of architecture but also a device for transforming an institution.

Jeff Stein: You had a significant role to play in MoMA's expansion, which was enormous, not only in square feet but also in dollars—$350 million worth of construction. It has come together in a way that makes it an integral part of New York and New York an integral part of it.

Terence Riley: Yes, and yet the collection itself doesn't really belong to New York. It doesn't really even belong to the United States. It's an international asset. Whatever the Uffizi is to the Renaissance, MoMA is to Modernism. Still, MoMA is a forward-looking institution. It will continue to collect. But the center of gravity of MoMA, even as it moves forward in time, is pre-World War II. It's no longer the new kid on the block, but that can be a tremendous asset. Seeing the "Demoiselles d'Avignon" next to Andy Warhol's "Marilyn" next to Cindy Sherman's portraits gives you a ripple through history that is incredibly profound; all of those paintings and photographs are made richer by the comprehensiveness of that experience. Comparatively, MAM has a rather small collection, from post-World War II forward; its center of gravity is actually right now, which offers an incredible opportunity as far as the architecture is concerned.

It relates to the concept of *hashi* that you described. We are all definitely in a *hashi* moment right now, if you assume that *hashi* is not tied to a time interval. What happens when *hashi* lasts 20 or 25 years? Italo Calvino remarked in *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* that the age of the heavy machines still exists, but they now obey the commands of weightless bits. With all our millennial haste to leave the 20th century behind and rush toward the digital future, some people thought that the *hashi* moment was simply a

Lines of Influence

After 15 years in the Museum of Modern Art's architecture and design department, Terence Riley is leaving an institution that has shaped design sensibilities since the genesis of the Modern Movement

1932 Department of architecture established; Philip Johnson, chairman. First show, ***Modern Architecture, International Exhibition***, tours the country (1932-38); related book, *Modern Architects*, by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Philip Johnson, and Lewis Mumford.

1934 ***Machine Art***, a pioneer presentation of machine-produced objects initiates the design collection, followed in 1935 by exhibition *New Acquisitions from the Exhibition of Machine Art*.

1938 ***Bauhaus: 1919-1928***, an exhibition and major book edited by Herbert Bayer and Ise and Walter Gropius; related traveling exhibition, *The Bauhaus: How It Worked (1939-40)*.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

1941 ***Organic Design in Home Furnishings***, a competition, publication, and exhibition directed by Eliot Noyes, leads to manufacture of prize-winning designs, including chairs by Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen; related traveling exhibition, *Manufacturing Modern Furniture and Furniture Design Today*.

1948 ***The House in the Museum Garden*** by Marcel Breuer, an actual house in outdoor exhibition area, with accompanying publication by Peter Blake and Marcel Breuer.

1950-1955 ***Good Design***, a series organized by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., intended to influence wholesale furnishings buyers as well as to convince manufacturers of the market for well-designed objects; held biannually at Chicago Merchandise Mart in conjunction with Furniture Show and yearly in New York.

1960 ***Visionary Architecture***, later tours United States and, under auspices of United States Information Service, the world.

1964 ***Architecture Without Architects***, exhibition with book by Bernard Rudofsky; later travels internationally.

1966 ***Louis I. Kahn***, comprehensive retrospective traveling exhibition.

matter of turning the calendar over. But as Calvino suggests, we're in a moment that is still very much influenced by the 20th century, even as it's now being transformed day by day by this new digital technology. Conceivably, this transitional moment might last as long as most people's working lives. But this is the moment that Miami is poised to capture.

Jeff Stein: One could argue that Miami's growth in recent years has been due less to its climate, as in its early years, and due more to its geography, its relationship with Latin America. As you think about collecting for MAM, do you find that your sense of the relationship between collecting and geography is changing?

Terence Riley: I have always felt that, while East-West collections make an incredible amount of sense historically, they've often been at the expense of a positive understanding of North-South connections. And no matter where we came from, whether it's North America, Central America, or South America, the phrase "the New World" links us indelibly in terms of a common experience. I've always had as a goal the reinforcement of that North-South axis without the sort of condescension or paternalism that seemed to characterize much of the European approach to Latin American art.

Jeff Stein: In fact, some of your recent work at MoMA has been about Latin American design.

Terence Riley: MoMA might be said to have been founded on the New York/Paris axis of the Cubist moment — Picasso, Braque and, later, figures like Man Ray and Mondrian. MoMA was unquestionably wedded to a vision of Modernism that was very European. But it has long been home to a respected Latin American collection, although the collection itself was always seen as a kind of subset.

Jeff Stein: How would you characterize Miami at this moment? How does MAM fit into that picture?

Terence Riley: What's interesting is how quickly Miamians, not satisfied with the notion of Miami as America's playground, have pushed the envelope of cosmopolitan life. This has all happened in just the last few years. For instance, the University of Miami has a billion-dollar capital campaign underway, and it's meeting its goals year by year. Miami is one of the fastest-growing philanthropic markets — third largest in the country. That has a lot to do with a growing self-awareness and a desire by Miamians to define themselves. And this means museums, auditoriums, and those kinds of civic structures that represent a — I hate to use the term — "world-class" city. It's gone from an architecture-free zone dominated by commercial interests to a place with plans for buildings by Enrique Norten, Herzog and de Meuron, and Frank Gehry.

Jeff Stein: You've done some design work in Miami, including a house for yourself. I've read that your contract with MAM precludes you from practicing architecture now.

Terence Riley: Freud says there are no coincidences, but I in fact did not have a grand plan to move fulltime to Miami, even though I did build a house there. After doing the Mies van der Rohe show at MoMA, I became fascinated by his notion of the courtyard house. It's a house that I'm not sure I could have built in the Hamptons, which in any case is very expensive; I needed to go someplace that was more welcoming of innovation and experimentation. Now, all of a sudden, I'll be living there fulltime. The museum and I agreed that I will remain a partner in my firm, Keenan Riley, but, as at MoMA, my priority, to the virtual exclusion of anything else, is building the museum. So even though I am taking another hiatus from the practice of architecture, I fully expect to be back at the drawing board at some point.

Jeff Stein: You were educated as an architect at Notre Dame and Columbia. How did you get to MoMA from there?

Terence Riley: The first thing I did after Notre Dame was to get a job overseas; I lived in Athens for three years, working mostly on projects in the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East. In some ways, I'm glad I didn't go straight into an American corporate practice but instead found my way into an international practice where things had to be thought through from the beginning all the time. There weren't many models for what we were doing, working in many different countries and different cultures at the same time; we were inventing it as we went along.

Then I came back to Columbia, after which I had a succession of short-term positions with Rafael Viñoly, Marcel Breuer and Associates, and James Polshek. I wasn't finding what I was looking for. No slander to any of those people — I enjoyed working on the projects there; it was just that the large-office culture wasn't a good fit for me. I was enjoying the freelance work that I was doing more than the big corporate jobs. Part of that had to do with needing to start from the beginning, needing to do something by myself and complete it in a relatively short time. This might have come from the fact that the first project I had worked on in Greece was a billion-dollar project — a whole city. And the next project I worked on was Lincoln West in New York City, another billion-dollar project. Huge projects. Whatever I'd learned about design I felt was lost in these unbelievably large structures and processes.

When I started my firm with John Keenan, we were incredibly excited about the romance of having our own studio and being responsible for everything: the budget; the design; the schedule; the permits. At the same time, we never lost the romantic notion of the architect as an intellectual who could write articles, publish, and teach from time to time.

I got involved in curating largely because of Robert Stern. When I was at Columbia, I told him about my great uncle, Paul Nelson, who was an architect. He had known Nelson, and said it would be great to do an exhibition of his work, if I could assemble any of his drawings. Bob literally bought me a plane ticket to go and put together a small exhibition. Philip Johnson came to the Nelson show. I remember giving him a tour — it was the first time I'd ever met him. We got all the way through the show and he said, in typical Philip fashion, "Well, I learned a few things, but in my opinion Paul Nelson is not a very good architect. But it's a good

1972 ***Italy: The New Domestic Landscape***, exhibition and publication edited by Emilio Ambasz.

1975 ***The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts***, major exhibition and publication by Arthur Drexler, examining the architectural theory and practice against which the Modern Movement rebelled; participants in related seminal symposia included: Richard Chafee; Henry-Russell Hitchcock; Neil Levine; Vincent Scully; David Van Zanten; George Baird; Colin Rowe; Carl Schorske; and Anthony Vidler.

1988 ***Deconstructivist Architecture***, exhibition guest-directed by Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, with the assistance of Frederieke Taylor, presenting work by Frank Gehry; Daniel Libeskind; Rem Koolhaas; Peter Eisenman; Zaha Hadid; Bernard Tschumi; and Coop Himmelb(l)au.

1994 ***Frank Lloyd Wright: Architect***, exhibition organized by Terence Riley and Peter Reed.

1995 ***Mutant Materials in Contemporary Design***, exhibition organized by Paola Antonelli.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

1995 ***Light Construction***, exhibition organized by Terence Riley, featuring more than 30 architects and artists from 10 countries, defining a new architecture of transparency and translucency.

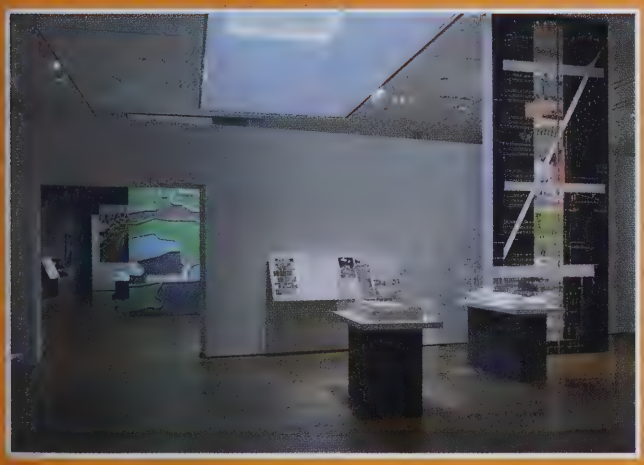
1999 ***The Un-Private House***, an exhibition of houses by international architects, organized by Terence Riley.

2001 ***Mies in Berlin***, a major scholarly exhibition and publication focusing on 30 projects by Mies van der Rohe (traveled to Berlin and Barcelona, 2002); organized by Terence Riley and Barry Bergdoll.

2002 ***AUTObodies: Speed, Sport, Transport***, organized by Peter Reed, featuring six automobiles from MoMA's collection.

2003 ***The Changing of the Avant-Garde: Visionary Architectural Drawings from the Howard Gilman Collection***, organized by Terence Riley, Bevin Cline, and Tina di Carlo.

2004 ***Tall Buildings***, an exhibition organized by Terence Riley and Guy Nordenson, featuring 25 high-rise projects around the world.



2005 ***Groundswell: Constructing the Contemporary Landscape***, featuring 23 recently design public spaces from around the world, organized by Peter Reed.

2006 ***Safe: Design Takes on Risk***, organized by Paola Antonelli, presenting more than 300 contemporary products and prototypes designed to protect body and mind from dangerous or stressful circumstances.

2006 ***On-Site: New Architecture in Spain***, organized by Terence Riley, documenting emergence of Spain as international center for design innovation.

show." Then he said, "So, you want to be a museum man?" And without any kind of thought, I said no.

Jeff Stein: What did it mean to you then?

Terence Riley: I thought what I was doing was part of being an architect. I didn't quite think through what he was saying. That first hubristic response was, no, I'm an architect. When I was offered the MoMA position in 1991, as with MAM, the one thing I couldn't agree to was giving up my practice. I could agree to becoming inactive. I don't think of myself as an arts administrator, or an architectural historian, or a professional fundraiser, or a management type. I'm an architect. That's the only reason I know how to do these things. How did I know how to do an exhibition on Paul Nelson? There was nothing in that show that I didn't learn in architecture school. I've jealously retained the title, and it has served me well.

Jeff Stein: You're teaching at Harvard this semester. Are you conscious of passing on that notion of generalism?

Terence Riley: The phrase I like is "generic intellectual." There is something about architectural education that I find extremely effective. Think about parallel educations — city planning, urban design, landscape design, product design; if you put five people in the five different design disciplines together in a room and tell them to work together on a project, nine times out of ten, if you come back in an hour, the architect will be leading the discussion. It will be extremely annoying sometimes, and sometimes a disaster, but I am always amazed at the empowerment of architectural education. It leads people, sometimes foolishly, to believe that they can do anything. It's one of the last Enlightenment-based education programs.

Jeff Stein: I agree. And yet it is an education that is having a hard time finding its relevance, its fit, in the culture right now. The profession of architecture, which has about 100,000 registered architects, is actually shrinking because, of the 5,000 people who graduate from American architecture schools every year, only 1,500 decide to become registered architects and go into the corporate world of making buildings.

Terence Riley: In this country, people seem to believe that getting a law degree is a good basis for whatever you want to do, whether you go into politics, business, law, or anything else. It says something about our culture that it rewards people who have that kind of education. By way of comparison, Italy has 40,000 architecture students, relatively few of whom go into practice. The assumption is that an architectural education will give you the skills you need to succeed in that culture. Studying the law is a very good education, of course, but an education about identifying problems, breaking them down to their constituent parts, and envisioning solutions, working through trial and error and refinement, can lead to success in any line of work.

Jeff Stein: Alfred Barr, the founding director of MoMA, was described as a hunter-gatherer for his collecting abilities, but also

"Postmodernism was the product of the world's impatience with Modernism. But once the disaffection with it happened, people started to swing back to a retooled Modernism that was not so full of itself."
— Terence Riley

as a teacher. His work at MoMA was really teaching an entire culture about the history of modern art. I imagine you're going to take a similar approach in Miami.

Terence Riley: I would like to. Alfred Barr was given an extraordinary opportunity to characterize what was happening around him. You have to remember that most of the time he was right in the middle of it; nobody has the benefit of living outside his own time. So his achievement in being able to build that collection and to understand what was really relevant in the 20th century is in some ways more apparent now. Of course, since his time, we've had the intervening Postmodern years. I felt most Postmodern architecture was a big yawn, but I can't deny that it was an extraordinarily useful exercise, especially in architecture, but also in art. The Postmodern polemicists turned the world upside-down and gave credence to the development of alternate histories, histories that are richer and more subtle. Ironically, of course, Postmodernism eventually led to a renewed interest in Modernism.

Jeff Stein: We've moved away from thinking of Modernism as a moment in history.

Terence Riley: The Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston was actually the first institution to employ the term "contemporary art," specifically to distinguish itself from MoMA by suggesting that Modernism was something in the past. Postmodernism made a sharper distinction. It was the product of the world's unhappiness, or maybe impatience, with Modernism. And I think the reason it got so much attention was that it promised to undo the evils of Modernism by saying we can put Humpty-Dumpty back together again. We can make this all make sense. We can make our cities whole and therefore make our lives whole and return to a more traditional pace and pattern of life. It showed that the general public is not as ideological as architects are. But skyscrapers with Palladian windows demonstrated that, although you can return to old forms, you really can't reproduce the coherent urban scale and fabric of traditional cities. Not with

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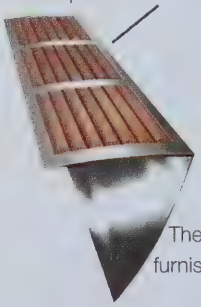

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a car around. Once that disaffection happened, in the late '80s, a lot of people started to swing back to what might be called a kind of retooled Modernism that was conscious of its roots, but not so full of itself.

Jeff Stein: Yoshio Taniguchi's work at MoMA represents this new wave of Modernism. According to an apocryphal story, he once said, "Raise me a lot of money and I'll give you great architecture; raise even more money, and I'll make the architecture disappear."

Terence Riley: It's not apocryphal. I was on the receiving end of that comment.

Jeff Stein: Apparently it worked. While the architecture doesn't disappear, it did allow Glenn Lowry, the director of MoMA, to say, "This isn't a destination, it's a museum." It's a refreshing shift from the dominance of the Bilbao model.

Terence Riley: There's an old argument that you only have two choices — a boring white box with great art, or a Guggenheim where it's all about the building. I really think Taniguchi has shown there are more than two ways to do it.

Jeff Stein: What do you, as an architect yourself, hope to accomplish with the new building for the Miami Art Museum?

Terence Riley: I think it will be a tremendous success if it can accomplish two things: One, give Miamians an image of themselves that is both appropriate and unexpected — that, like Bilbao, transforms the people as much as the institution. The second is to help these same people understand how art fits into that redefined vision of themselves.

Jeff Stein: The art dealer David Zwirner said, "Artists are usually most interesting in mid-career, in their 40s and 50s." So, there you are.

Terence Riley: It certainly applies to architects. Even more so now, because an architect is required to learn more. When you graduate from architecture school, you think you pretty much know everything. And then you spend your first decade apprenticing, realizing how much you don't know. By your third decade, the feeling that you will never learn everything becomes a certainty. But that's also the point where really good architects get going, because they begin not only to understand that things continue to change, but also to perceive patterns in change. And so the future becomes less murky. Technology, society, and culture are all in flux, but they all have patterns and you start to understand the way things ebb and flow. And then you can start doing buildings that are truly of their moment, simply because you've become a master of so many disciplines. To be a master means to accept that nothing that has come before will last. ■

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Covering the Issues

Domestic bliss... It's no secret: we're building fancier and fancier kitchens as we cook less and less. And in 2005, Americans spent $68.5 billion to remodel them. "Are We Worthy of Our Kitchens?" asks Christine Rosen, in ***The New Atlantis*** (Winter 2006). In a story that is part history lesson, part cultural critique, Rosen examines the current disconnect between our domestic fantasies and daily reality as she traces the evolution of today's demand for restaurant-worthy kitchens back to the invention of the cast-iron stove (1830s), the motorized dishwasher (1893), and the electric range (1908). Our drive to technologically impress is not new. Apparently, when Vice President Nixon showed Nikita Khrushchev a model American kitchen in a 1959 Moscow exhibit, Khrushchev remarked, "Don't you have a machine that puts food into the mouth and pushes it down?" If you've ever specified (or desired) a Sub-Zero, Gaggenau, or La Cornue, this article is for you.

The New New Urbanism?... By this year or next, over half of the world's population will live in cities. This is up from 3 percent in 1800, and 14 percent just a century ago. This is not a population explosion, but a radical shift. In "City Planet" in ***Strategy + Business*** (Spring 2006), Stewart Brand discusses implications of this global urbanization and the resulting squatter communities. Brand suggests that they illustrate "new urbanism" to the max, offering us all lessons in resourceful building, live/work networks, and ecological sustainability.

12 steps to a better you... "You either have the interiors thing going on or you don't" — and you know who you are. Do you lie in wait for the next *Dwell*? Do you secretly pore over *Design Within Reach*? Terry Castle, too, is an admitted "house porn addict"; she explores the meaning of our collective absorption in "Home Alone; The Dark Side of Shelter-Lit Addiction" for ***The Atlantic Monthly*** (March 2006). Castle's tongue-in-cheek analysis sees this proliferation of mailed material as a middle-class coping mechanism. The mags offer escape, whether from post-9/11 unease to childhood "decorative traumas." (A blue spray-painted sofa lurks in her past. What's in yours?)

Happy Birthday... ***Fast Company*** is 10 years old. The 10th Anniversary issue (March 2006), however, looks forward, not backward, examining who and what "will change how we work and live over the next 10 years." Most interesting are the larger trends. A population that is much older, much younger, and much more racially diverse than ever before means more retirement homes *and* more schools as well as — finally (maybe) — a more diverse profession. Sustainability has made the mainstream and is here to stay. With GE pledging to improve energy efficiency by 4 percent annually, Starbucks using wind to provide 20 percent of its electric needs, and the first "green" McDonald's now open, maybe it's time for LEED certification to become part of the architectural registration exam.

Filler material... Two recent exhibits, four books, and the only building underway (or so it seems) at Ground Zero — without question, Santiago Calatrava and those who write about him have been busy. Martin Filler reviews all in "The Bird Man" for ***The New York Review of Books*** (December 15, 2005), and in doing so, takes on current penchants for architectural "branding" and signature buildings, Calatrava's ambitions, his popularity, and the work itself. Filler argues that "Calatrava's streamlined all-white architecture — instantly identifiable as his alone, and distinctively different from that of any of his contemporaries — is not quite so original as some believe." In fact, Filler writes, it's overdone, derivative, predictable, and sentimental. That "You're no Jack Kennedy" line comes to mind. Tough review or attack? It's hard to tell. ■

Editor's Note: Recent stories on the Katrina recovery are the focus of an occasionally updated, special edition of Gretchen Schneider's *Periodical Roundup*, available at www.architectureboston.com.

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA, teaches the architecture studios at Smith College and works with Rogers Marvel Architects.

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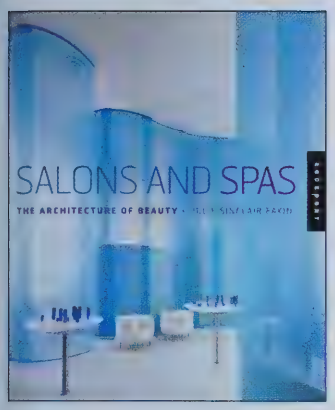


SALONS AND SPAS: THE ARCHITECTURE OF BEAUTY
by Julie Sinclair Eakin
Rockport Publishers, 2005
Reviewed by Michael Kim AIA

"Beauty is ceasing to be an ugly word among architects" observes author Julie Sinclair Eakin in her first book, *Salons and Spas: The Architecture of Beauty*. The 28 projects described in this handsome book address the concept of beauty programmatically, each of them serving the needs of the beauty industry. But the spaces themselves are beautiful, as rigorously conceived and executed as any other project that might serve what some might judge a less frivolous purpose. The book reaches out to readers outside the design community and succeeds in its primary function of showcasing interesting design. It offers but does not insist on intellectual links and provides a valuable reference beyond the program type, particularly in the realm of interior architecture.

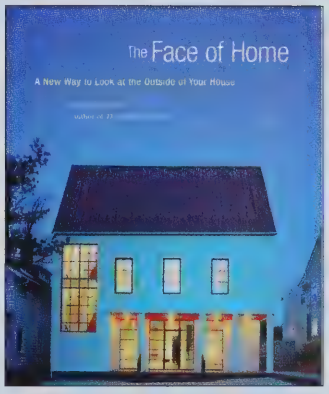
The book features projects around the world, more to show different variations on a theme than to depict any sort of regionalism. Local talent is well represented in projects by Office dA (Joli Hair Design in Chestnut Hill) and 3SIX0 (Lumière Salon in Providence). Scales and budgets also vary from a few hundred square feet that manage innovation on a shoestring, to a 40,000-square-foot complex by Grimshaw Partners. Examining the insight behind innovation, the book provides floor plans, project profiles, and interviews with designers and architects. The projects are illustrated with high-quality architectural photography and informative line drawings, handsomely composed without being intrusive.

The projects are placed in two categories: "Spaces of Retreat" and "Spaces of Connection." Although opposite in their intention, they both represent reactions to the urban conditions where most of the projects are located. Two designs fall simultaneously in both categories, cleverly managing their own contradictions. A brief chapter on "Reflecting Beauty," probably intended as an intermezzo, might have been better edited into the other chapters.

The audience for this book presumably also falls into two categories: those interested in salons and spas as customers or cosmetology professionals, and those whose interest lies in the innovative design of useful spaces. The text succeeds on both levels. Dutifully journalistic and loaded with information in eminently readable descriptions, it betrays only a slight leaning toward the architectural reader. The author also imparts a certain lightness to the book, which jumps easily among references as diverse as Gaston Bachelard and Roger Moore-era James Bond films. It is a pleasure to read.

Salons and Spas mines a building-type where relatively small projects encourage innovation, often by emerging designers. The projects illustrated in the book can also serve as inspiration for spaces with entirely different functions. In her acknowledgments, the author thanks those "who have encouraged [her] to search for beauty in less obvious places." It's also useful advice to designers in search of fresh ideas.

Michael Kim AIA is the principal of Michael Kim Associates in Brookline, Massachusetts.



THE FACE OF HOME
by Jeremiah Eck FAIA
Taunton Press, 2006
Reviewed by John Tittmann AIA

Why do Americans build so many ugly houses? What does "ugly" mean anyway? Can it be defined? How do you avoid building an ugly house? Start by picking up Jeremiah Eck's new book, *Face of Home*.

Using some 22 contemporary examples of houses designed by architects, Eck leads the reader through lessons that illustrate how good house design is achieved. His examples represent a range of sites from urban to rural and an equally broad range of styles. Each includes a plan, analytical text, and photographs.

Eck has put together a useful "how-to" book. He presents houses that are friendly, relate to their sites, and seem authentic. He dissects the internal logic of each design and shows how the inside relates to the outside, how the massing and scale are

handled, and how the façades grow out of the logic of each example. McMansions are ugly not because they are big, Eck writes, but because they don't relate to the site, to the details, or even to the uses.

In his fluid introduction, Eck compares house design to portraiture: a house is like a head with a face. A portrait is strongest if the composition is balanced, if the various parts relate to each other, and if the complexion is consistent. He then organizes the painter's advice into five points that he calls "hallmarks": First, the site and the house should work as one; the building should belong to its place. Second, massing and scale ought to be balanced, and the cubic volume should relate to a person's size. Third, the plan should relate to the elevations; the inside and outside cannot be designed separately. Fourth, the parts of the house should be in harmony: materials, windows and doors, colors, and the various elevations must work together as one three-dimensional design. Finally, the details should "spring from the whole": textures, edges, and elements like columns and chimneys should all support the principal composition. Only when all these pieces come together can a sense of authenticity be achieved. Ugliness derives from inauthenticity, he notes, just as beauty derives from authenticity.

Eck's five hallmarks echo Le Corbusier's *Five Points of Architecture* of the 1920s. Then, Corbu ranted against the inauthentic, proposing instead an antidote to the "exhausted styles": *pilotis* to get the building off the ground; a free plan; a free façade; ribbon windows; and a roof garden. In the 1840s, Pugin argued that "pointed architecture" (Gothic) was authentic, and Vitruvius, in the time of Caesar, showed that the path to authenticity was through balance of three things: a good plan; a solid structure; and a sense of delight.

It was ever thus: architects argue the indefensible and explain the inexplicable. *Face of Home* is a welcome addition to this venerable line.

John Tittmann AIA is a principal of Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects in Boston.

ICONIC BUILDING
by Charles Jencks
Rizzoli, 2005
Reviewed by James McCown

Charles Jencks, who for decades has been an astute and erudite observer of the architectural scene, has written an engaging book examining the nature of the iconic building. His thesis is that an architectural hierarchy girded by religious

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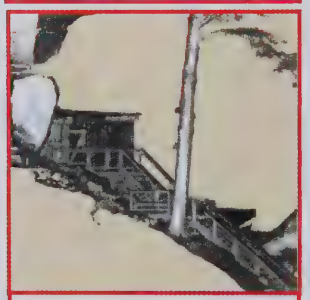

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and social certainties has given way to a Nietzschean stylistic nihilism and hucksterish "build-it-and-they-will-come" mentality. Thus while houses of worship and palaces of government once dominated the skyline, a pluralistic and multicultural society appeases its new gods with novelty and bombast for their own sake. These are not original thoughts, but through Jencks' clever and insightful writing, they take on a fresh relevance as he discusses the current work of Frank Gehry, Daniel Libeskind, Norman Foster, Zaha Hadid and, well, you get the idea.

Far from disliking this trend toward manic iconography, Jencks seems to revel in it. He masterfully traces iconic architecture back to structures like the Eiffel Tower, Wright's original Guggenheim Museum, Le Corbusier's chapel at Ronchamp, and Utzon's Sydney Opera House. It is in the background chapters that the book is at its best — Jencks is perhaps the most brilliant observer of Corbusier ever. But in chapters about Gehry, Hadid, *et al*, he almost sounds more like a cheerleader rather than a critic.

He writes approvingly, for example, of Romaldo Giurgola's Australian Parliament House in Canberra as reflective of "cultural diversity" by being largely subterranean, a sort of "non-icon" icon. So a *buried* building is a good one? He gives Libeskind wide berth to wax eloquently about how emotional people are going to be when they enter his self-styled "sacred ground" at Ground Zero, never bothering to question whether it should be the role of an architect to act as Oprah-in-chief, coaxing citizens to cry on cue. And, outrageously, Jencks goes along with Rem Koolhaas' mocking of George W. Bush as a religious-crazed "totalitarian." In so doing, the author completely misses the irony that, in virtually the same breath, Koolhaas is obsequiously defending China Central Television, for whom he has designed an iconic Beijing headquarters. Here is an architect quick to trash the US while building agitprop for one of the world's most oppressive regimes.

"In the past, buildings expressed shared meaning and conveyed it through well-known conventions," Jencks writes, adding, "our global culture now has no unifying faith." But maybe Jencks also accepts too uncritically this notion of a fractured civic consensus. For example, shouldn't the completed Ground Zero memorial be less about emotional catharsis and more about bravery and sacrifice — a tribute to those who paid the ultimate price? And shouldn't its architecture be a distillation of the best 20th-century design thinking, not another opportunity for vain and capricious form-giving? In his infatuation with the most celebrated architects of our time, Jencks apparently thinks otherwise.

James McCown is a freelance writer and marketing consultant in Somerville, Massachusetts.

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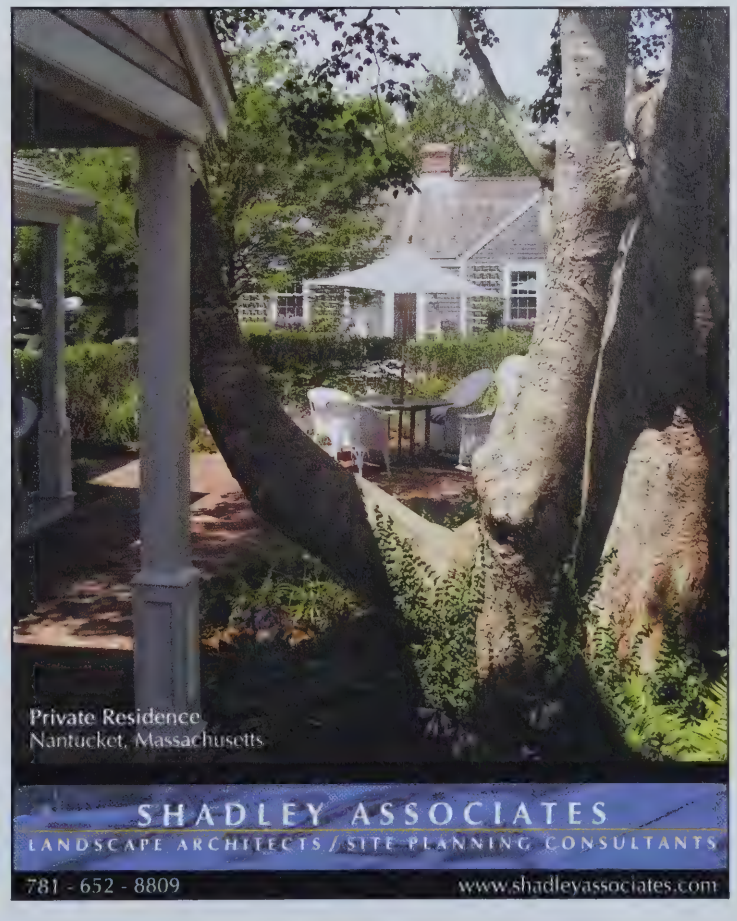

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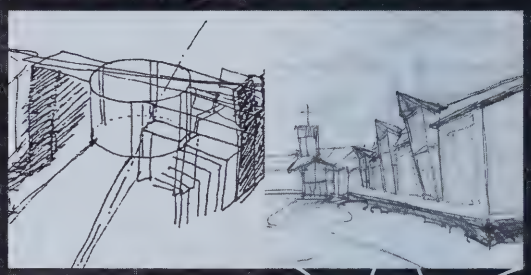

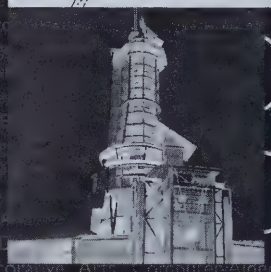

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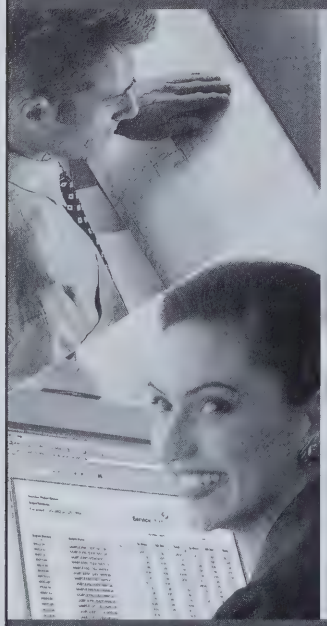

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The Mirror

"There's a helluva lot more of us than there is of them." — Frank Zappa

I was an ugly kid. Buck teeth. Fat cheeks. Bad hair. Terrible hair. You look at the old albums and it's a museum of bad hair. I should have had myself shellacked. Maybe I was shellacked. I don't even remember.

But listen: most of the good writers out there are ugly. Butt ugly. Plug ugly. *Fugly*. I'd give you a long list of examples, but this isn't that kind of thing. I'm not interested in research. Research bores me. You know what I'm talking about, anyway. All that literary dogmeat. Except for Faulkner. Faulkner was hot. But he was a drunk, and he was mean to his kids.

I only trust the ugly writers, anyway. Deep down, those are the ones who have earned their wrath.

As for author photos, they're a goddamn fraud. The photo on my first book is Exhibit A. It's the most pathetic sensitivo-beefcake shot of the century. My friends tell me I look like a gay porn star. Maybe I am a gay porn star. Maybe my gay porn star name is Maxi Spray. Doesn't matter. Anyone who's seen me in person knows the truth.

If you want to make art in this culture, if you want to shake people down for their feelings, you're ugly by proxy anyway. All that's going to happen is this: you'll sit down and decide you're *profound* and you'll create a lot of dreck for a long time and various people along the way will feed you little niblets of praise, which you deserve, but not for what you're actually producing, which is still a stinking heap of narcissism. What you're aiming for here is to rediscover that inconsolably ugly little kid inside you, because that's what triggers the beauty jones.

Some measures that will help:

1. Watch a lot of television: Television is the place where you will realize that beauty makes people stupid.

2. Read the Bible: Not the whole thing, just enough to figure out the basic point: that God's toughest gig is to love the ugly.

3. Stop exercising: The two key words here are Restless and Flabby. Pasty is also of considerable import.

4. Stay away from healthy romantic interaction: The worst thing you can do is to use the funk of sexual success as a hedge against the appropriate depths of self-horror. Remember: you're probably clever enough to fool someone better-looking for a while. But in the end, you're ugly. That's where you live, and you live there alone.

The rest (bad news!) consists of the dogged, lonely work. You sit there. You push ideas around. And when you, or they, feel ugly enough, have felt ugly enough for long enough, a little thrush of beauty unfurls to rescue you. Then it disappears.

If you're truly unlucky, some of the bad parents out there will start to accept your crap and you'll move on to the next set of bad parents until finally you're dealing with the world of media and celebrity, which is inhabited by bright, ambitious people who hate your guts for still trying. They will make you feel worse and worse and uglier and uglier and *in the end* you'll need to thank them, because they, too, are helping you find that inner ugly schmuck kid I keep mentioning.

Are you picking up what I'm putting down?

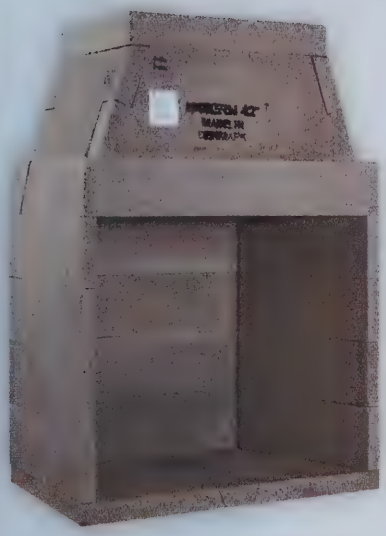
A few more items of business:

Buy art, okay? Quit mucking about like a cheapskate and wolfing down burgers from Fat Food. Stop throwing your money down Hollywood's sewers. Vote with your dough and vote for the stuff written or sculpted or sung by the ugly. Actually concentrate on who you're having sex with. Hold your one and only heart to a higher standard. And so on.

I'm proud to be ugly, and proud to make pretty things.

What are you? ■

Steve Almond is the author of two story collections, *My Life in Heavy Metal* and *The Evil B.B. Chow*, and the nonfiction book *Candyfreak*. His new novel, *Which Brings Me to You* (written with Julianna Baggott) comes out in May. This essay is adapted from a piece that appeared in *Virginia Quarterly Review*.



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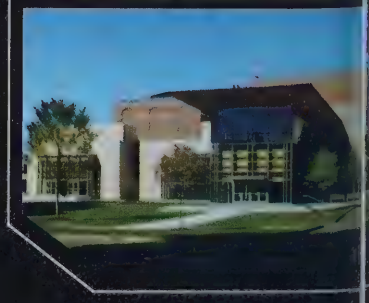

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Spirit of '76

Why 1976? Why look at one year, let alone this year in particular? The quick answer is that it's as good a benchmark as any. Benchmarks are all around us — in annual job reviews, reports from mutual-fund companies, even in the form of the pencilled lines on the kitchen door frame that measure how much the kids have grown. Benchmarks are regularly applied to cities, too — usually as economic or demographic statistics. But it's rare to step back and assess broader changes in a city — changes in culture, values, personality, spirit.

The year 1976 actually has much to recommend it as a benchmark for Boston. The year of the Bicentennial, the Tall Ships parade, the opening of Quincy Market, the completion of the Hancock tower, and the first First Night, 1976 was a turning point in the city's history, a time when the city embraced the concept of "public realm" (though the term was not much used then) and took the first steps toward becoming the world-class city it is today. After years of urban-renewal demolition, after grand plans such as Government Center, after countless meetings and speeches about "the New Boston," Bostonians could at last see the first manifestations of promises of a healthier, more vibrant city. And it excited them.

With crowds that could be measured in hundreds of thousands — people who were returning to the city for the sheer pleasure of public spectacles in an urban environment — events during that Bicentennial year suggested a new role for the modern city beyond commerce and industry. The view of the city as a place of leisure and entertainment has fueled the city's rebirth as much as the strength of its medical and educational institutions or the vigor of its financial and service industries. The suburbanites who had fled the city came back to visit and, more recently, to stay.

Yet the mid-'70s were hardly halcyon years; the word "crisis" was frequently in the headlines. The busing crisis seized the city, sending seismic waves of fear, violence, and distrust across the city, with implications for racial and educational issues that can be felt today. The economy was dismal, as the nation struggled to meet the challenges of the energy crisis and as Boston still contended with the inertia of decades of disinvestment.

Thirty years later, issues that came of age during that era continue to have a profound effect on what we build and how — even if we have not yet fully resolved them. The energy crisis that sent architects scrambling to continuing-education workshops to learn about insulation and thermal breaks begat an energy code and, eventually, the sustainability movement.

The mid-'70s also spawned today's smart-growth movement, with initiatives such as the Office of State Planning, formed by Governor Michael Dukakis during his first term (1975-1979). Its emphasis on public transit, preserving the character of cities and towns, conserving undeveloped land in suburbia and exurbia, and targeting new development toward existing community centers was exemplified by a policy to build new state facilities such as registries on downtown sites.

But the *look* of the city was most profoundly changed by the preservation movement that came into its own in the mid-'70s, accompanied by a new wave of sometimes-unlikely citizen activists (one subset was known as the LOLITS — little old ladies in tennis shoes). Citizen participation is a fact of development life these days. But it's sometimes hard not to think that in codifying acceptable treatment of historic structures, we have also ossified our own response to them. Ben Thompson's glass garage doors on Quincy Market and Graham Gund's multi-level restructuring of a fire station for the Institute of Contemporary Art suggested a far greater ease with historic structures and a far richer understanding of the nature of urbanity. The architects and preservationists of 30 years ago deliberately married preservation and energy concerns, a symbiosis that is today largely forgotten with every tear-down that is replaced with another SUH — sport-utility house.

> 1976 was a turning point in the city's history, a time when Bostonians could at last see the first manifestations of promises of a healthier, more vibrant city.

In 1976, Orwell's 1984 still loomed in a scary view of the future, as did the 2001 of Kubrick's space odyssey. 2006 seemed unimaginably far away, surely enough time to solve the major problems of the day. Some of that work remains unfinished, some happily resolved. The future is never as far away as you think.

Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA
Editor

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Where do I start? "In Defense of One Western Avenue" [May/June 2006] appears to me little more than an exercise in good-ole-boy back-patting. Even after admitting that One Western Avenue is not Machado and Silvetti's best building, George Thrush insists we look to it as some kind of example for the future of our city and our profession. It's not very good, but it's not their fault, he insists; they are, after all, acknowledged to be "the most important, skilled, and influential architects in Boston." Well, hey, let's face it: if One Western Avenue weren't by Machado and Silvetti, he wouldn't be defending it.

Mr. Thrush's argument says perhaps more about the state of architectural theory and criticism in the US in 2006 than it does about the taste and perceptions of the public. Architecture used to be a social art, a service profession, building on deep cultural roots. But architecture — especially as practiced by academic Modernists — has become all too often a profession in which the practitioners perform for one another, try to outdo each other in being "progressive" and clever, and give each other awards for that. One might suggest that they listen to the public — not to mention "critics, and even architects" — once in a while, and try to figure out why a building like One Western Avenue is so reviled by its "audience," whom Thrush acknowledges does know how to look at painting, music, and performance art. In this case, I believe the public does "get it," and they don't appreciate a thumb in their eye.

One has to acknowledge that the corner of Storrow Drive and Western Avenue is a pretty thankless site — not much more than a traffic exchange, separated even from the Charles by a river of asphalt. But this building is a pretty arid, albeit neat, pile of hard-edged boxes backed up against a parking garage and devoid of the necessary social gestures (entrance? gateway? visible pathways in or through it? references to other structures in its "community"?) or any references to human scale except the several wallpaper versions of generic window grids. This building is little more than a 1960s developer apartment house (with some expensive structural steel hidden in the middle), wallpapered in relentless Modernist Minimalist "one-liners" that become even less interesting in day-after-day contact. I would like to suggest that maybe the response isn't due to the public's "reactionary aesthetic conservatism" so much as to just plain misplaced priorities by the architects. And that, in itself, surely justifies a "deep cultural pessimism."

Mr. Thrush talks about the future. What does this building say about the future? It is as isolated in its way as the Doubletree hotel or the Genzyme "cathedral" down the drive. But One Western Avenue can still be justified purely as "Architecture"? Hogwash!

Vance Hosford AIA
West Townshend, Vermont

Editor Elizabeth Padjen asserts, "To produce an ugly work of enduring significance takes talent combined with some measure of brashness and disregard for the rules of engagement" [From the Editor, May/June 2006]. That is true, but what is the value of ugliness to its context? Like the devil, a polar opposite heightens comprehension of the accomplishment of god or the ideal — in this case, beauty. Perhaps awareness, at both ends of the spectrum, raises the bar of inspiration.

I loved the ruminations of your round-table panel and also those of George Thrush on notions of Ugly as radical posture, as aggressive attack, as deliberate tease, or as accident. Whether intentional or an error of genes, trauma, or judgment, the ugly is arresting, creating disequilibrium and dissonance by the shock of differentiation from the norm.

I think Hansy Better gets close when she notes it is better to proclaim than be damned as ugly. Nevertheless, I remain somewhat dubious about the process of transformation. While our perceptions are altered by familiarity and affection and our sensibilities are simultaneously dulled, I am not sure the matter resides only in the perception. That much is psychologically and culturally determined. "Good enough," while short of the visceral impact of great beauty, can be indeed a pleasant bore, but "enough bad" can be an extremely unpleasant bore with a further coarsening and deleterious effect. The danger of Ugly is its relationship to trash and violence. A sharp prick, deftly handled, might be acupuncture; a crude stab can be fatal.

Kyra Montagu
Brookline, Massachusetts

Every issue of *ArchitectureBoston* is a pleasant surprise. With great joy, I saw in your "Generations" issue [March/April 2006] Elsa Dorfman's photograph of one of my mentors, John Wilson FAIA. Our profession is so engaged in imagery that we forget our roots, our family, our professional brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers. Our legacy, beyond our buildings, is the architects of tomorrow, whom we must mentor. I take great pride in this responsibility — almost more than in built work. It is wonderful that your terrific text acknowledges this responsibility and importance.

George E. Marsh, Jr. AIA
Boston

My elderly friends — and some of the younger ones, too — are moving. They're fleeing their dependence on driving and are looking for a place to live where shopping and other services are within easy walking distance. They're also looking for community.

The suburban solution doesn't work any more. Housing developments are empty all day. No sign of tricycles, bicycles, baby carriages, basketball hoops over garage doors; no dogs, leashed or unleashed. Where is everyone? Parents are out working 9-to-5, and children are either at school, daycare, or planned activities. No more Cops-and-Robbers or

Hide-and-Seek or simply running loose in the neighborhood. Well-kept roads and three-car garages indicate priorities.

But something is changing. Computers are revolutionizing everything. As Faith Baum said in the recent roundtable ["Living Room," March/April 2006], "the home office is more significant than we realize." Thanks to the computer, there's no need for long daily commutes if at least part of the work can be done at home. As far as the work goes, it really doesn't matter where you live.

Is it possible that, with no deliberate planning, a new lifestyle is evolving, due to the use of computers? Instead of segregation by age levels or occupation, we might have a new version of small town living. To quote Michael Crosbie in that discussion, we might again have "communities and neighborhoods that work." Parents could spend more time with their children, and casual meetings could replace the coffee break.

How extraordinary that such a sophisticated, modern-age device as the computer could bring back the small town life that many of us would like to see.

Sally Harkness FAIA
Lexington, Massachusetts

The architectural lineage and the sense of collaborative intimacy highlighted in your "Bridging the Gap" photo essay [March/April 2006] seemed to touch upon one of the real strengths of Boston's architectural community. This continuity and evolution within the profession, when coupled with the prospect of a "Boston School," which was addressed last year [September/October 2005], raises some interesting questions about the state of the profession in Boston.

Understandably, neither issue touched upon the current influx of large, national design firms that have opened up or acquired Boston offices in recent years. This might be an attempt to capture a piece of Boston's aura, but more likely our market. What is truly unique about many of the Boston firms that practice nationally and internationally is that, for the most part, we practice from single offices. I firmly believe that this has contributed to the intimacy and success of our architectural community.

As you noted, the work produced by Boston architects has been quite good; but even more noteworthy is the fact that firms both large and small have consistently contributed to the recent rise in the quality of work over the past five years. Just look at the diversity represented in the BSA Honor Awards program over the past several years.

It would be terrific if a "Boston School" existed — we would all benefit — but it does not exist, at least not yet. We all need to keep doing better work and do our best to see that some of this good work somehow gets built in our city by Boston architects. Unfortunately, most of the best work by Boston firms has not influenced the city as profoundly as it does other cities. Until it does, the so-called Boston School will simply not exist.

Kevin B. Sullivan AIA
Boston

"Solving for X" [March/April 2006] presented an interesting evaluation of the changes in society (movies, technology, social movements worldwide) that have influenced the architecture we are seeing today and what future generations will work toward. Thomas de Monchaux specifically talks about the projection of adolescent thinking into adulthood as a phenomenon in Generation X. I think Generation Y is different, in mindset as well as in education. It is more responsible and has different expectations. It is more realistic and more serious, and has more concern about war, religious opposition, global warming, and ecological problems. The world, as well as architecture, is rapidly changing, and we young architects have much more responsibility and commitment toward building our environment than just generating originality and flashy design.

Adriana Ramacciotti, Assoc. AIA
Boston

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ArchitectureBoston is custom-published bimonthly for the Boston Society of Architects by The Pohly Company.
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The redesign of *ArchitectureBoston* was supported by a grant from the Graham Foundation.

ArchitectureBoston invite story ideas that connect architecture to social, cu al political, and economic tr ds Editorial guidelines are at www.architectureboston com. *ArchitectureBoston* assumes no liability for unsolicited materials. The views expressed in *ArchitectureBoston* are n necessarily those of the editorial staff, the Boston Society of Architects, or The Pohly Company.

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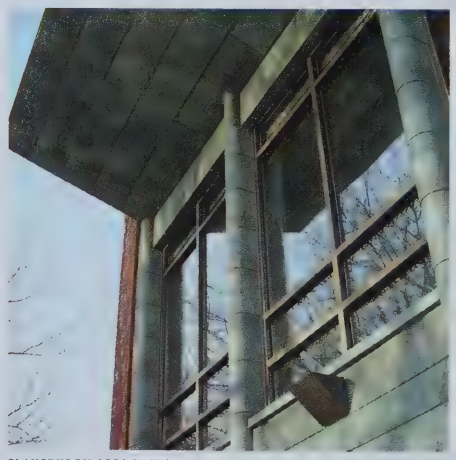

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Wes Jones, *Pro/Con Package Housing System*, 2000.

Living in Motion: Design and Architecture for Flexible Dwelling

Institute for Contemporary Art, Boston
February 1 – May 7, 2006

This last show at the ICA's Back Bay space reads like a very cool boutique: a bit antique shop, a bit Design Within Reach. The disparate objects are unified by the necessity to be two things at once: objects with design integrity that are also portable or transformable. Examples span time periods and cultures: the plush, collapsible Kyrgyzstani yurt; a Japanese cabinet that transforms into a stair; OPEN Office's crate-able house prototype. They're fascinating in the means by which they achieve this duality.

The show, organized by the Vitra Design Museum in Germany, avoids a simplistic view of movement and mobility as something inherently Western and modern. Many of the objects are everyday items whose exquisite designs invite them to be viewed as works of art. These include lightweight leather trunks of the Arikara people of South Dakota; an antique wooden scissors stool; a portable Japanese hibachi. Familiarity can preclude fascination, however, and some of the contemporary consumer products — cargo pants, a minidisk player, a video Walkman — although well-designed, don't inspire the same level of contemplation as the less familiar objects. The pairing of a Powerbook G4 with a 19th-century travel desk is a clever exception.

Some familiar designs are presented in revelatory ways, however. The model and digital animation of the multi-use, transformable second level of Rietveld's Schroder House show more than any number of static images could. Lesser-known precursors of familiar objects are also wonderful, such as the safari chair that inspired Corbusier's 1928 chrome-and-leather sidechair.

Skip Newbury Street and pay a last visit to ICA Back Bay. The 1930s Louis Vuitton wardrobe will inspire the same acquisitive impulses as the neighboring shops, without any danger that you'll pull out your credit card.

Michael Grant AIA is the principal of Grant Studio in Boston.

Greetings From MY Boston

Photographic Resource Center
Boston University
February 2 – March 26, 2006

Greetings From MY Boston, directed by Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA, and Erika Zekos, Assoc. AIA, and guided by photographer Jamara Wakefield, showcases photography by eighth-graders from Citizen Schools and the Fourth Presbyterian Music and Arts Program in South Boston. Through a series of postcards from the students' neighborhoods, this exhibition challenges our notions of what makes Boston unique. There are no cobblestone streets or swan boats. Instead, we see storefronts, apartment blocks, and churches in neighborhoods not typically included in tourist guides.

The postcards present fragments of stories of life in these neighborhoods and, through their lack of sentimentality, compel the viewer to look more closely at the boundary lines around "our" city. The photographs convey both stark differences and striking similarities to mass-produced tourist postcards. The differences are obvious because of the neighborhoods selected for this series, but the spirit is familiar in images that sometimes capture an intimate understanding of place, signs of beauty, and a sense of fun. Wish you were here?

Mark Ruckman is an associate editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

ArchVoices in Boston

(sponsored by the Boston Society of Architects and the Boston Architectural Center)
April 7 – 9, 2006

Everybody wants to change the world, but doing so requires a readiness to spend weekends sitting in a dark, acoustically challenged room. At least that's what I concluded on a chilly April weekend, when I joined 30 young architecture advocates to figure out how to shake things up. Targeting architecture's convoluted licensing process, John Cary and Casius Pealer were the unifying force behind this retreat, sponsored by the BSA and the BAC.

Cary is clean-cut with rectangular glasses that reveal a passion for design, and he's been looking at public issues since he completed his master's thesis at Berkeley analyzing the declining number of people pursuing architectural licensing in California (a precipitous drop of 70 percent over the last decade). Pealer is longhaired, sporting John Lennon eyewear and hemp shirts, and seems more willing to start a revolution through confrontation, albeit eloquent confrontation. Under the guise of examining the licensing issue through ArchVoices, the organization they co-founded in 1999, both Cary and Pealer are really in the business of politically empowering their generational peers. They have spent the past six years teaching intern architects about public advocacy and, in the process, warning older architects that the youngsters are learning the game.

Like any profession, architecture has its share of malcontents, often stemming from the sense of powerlessness that Cary and Pealer address in their workshops. The agenda was designed to expose the inner-workings of organizations like the AIA and NCARB, to slice through the mystery and increase accessibility. They even enlisted R.K. Stewart FAIA, the AIA president-elect, and Douglas Engebretson FAIA, who chairs the Massachusetts licensing board, to personalize the institutions and give interns a chance to build relationships—imperative when change is the goal.

Since discovering the secrets of advocacy, Cary and Pealer have moved beyond the licensing issue. Cary has gathered an all-star board of directors for his latest cause, Public Architecture, which challenges architects to work for the public good. Meanwhile, Pealer is a lawyer in Washington, DC, working on affordable housing development and policy. Although Cary and Pealer are moving on, they have inspired many to continue what they started. Follow-up emails after the weekend were supercharged; one participant described their work as "transformative." Maybe that's how you start a revolution.

Rachel Levitt is a designer and writer.

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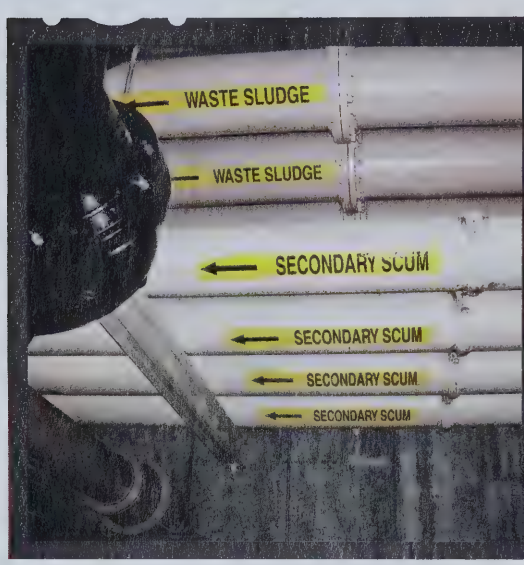
The Waste Land



The place: The Deer Island waste treatment plant, which handles an average of 370 million gallons of sewage generated daily by Boston and 43 surrounding towns.

The operations manager: Bill Waitt, who worked at the old Deer Island plant and was involved in the design of the new one before it opened in 1995. Every corner of the plant is familiar to him. Many times each day he crisscrosses the island in his truck, checking that things are running smoothly. They generally do. It's a place with a lot of machinery, and very few people.

The answer to the question everyone asks: No, not much. Surprisingly little, in fact. In most areas, there's none at all. In some places it's comparable to what you'd notice in a public restroom during a heavy period of use — the Wang Center, say, at intermission. In others, it's reminiscent of freshly manured fields in springtime. Only in a very few places is it hold-your-nose bad.

9:20 In the scum screen room, Bill reviews punch-list items with the contractors who have been installing new rotary drum screens to filter out scum floating in the wastewater tanks. The room is odor-controlled, but the dampers need to be balanced so that the fans will pull the right amount of moisture and hydrogen sulfide out of the air. The question under discussion: how do you shut down enough to make the adjustments while still keeping the equipment functioning?

Bill has been at the plant since 7 A.M., checking shift logs; giving direction to today's shift managers and area supervisors; and generating a daily availability report, assessing the status of equipment and prioritizing maintenance needs.

10:14 Bill walks through the vast basement beneath the plant's 12 egg-shaped digesters. A familiar landmark from the air, the eggs contain the sludge that has been separated from the wastewater, breaking it down with bacteria. The resultant methane gas helps to provide heat and electricity for the plant; solids are turned into fertilizer for citrus groves and golf courses.

Over time, sludge can build up in the eggs, creating struvite — a clog of phosphate, ammonium, and magnesium — which needs to be dissolved periodically with sulfuric acid. The acid can be introduced only after the four eggs that make up a module have been drained. "The pipes are empty," the area manager tells Bill, "so we can go ahead."

The massive curving base of the egg hangs from the ceiling, dwarfing the two men. It's like a scene from a NASA movie: a paradoxical mix of awesome power and prosaic gadgetry.

11:04 Bill meets with an area supervisor in the centrifuge control room, which is dominated by a bank of computer screens displaying PICS (process information and control systems) imagery and data from various plant operations. The PICS system keeps an unblinking omniscient eye on the plant; it can overview the entire island and at the same time zero in on what's happening with a specific valve.

On one of Bill's last check-ins, the system had picked up a sudden doubling in the quantity of polymer being used to separate water from sludge in the centrifuges. Bill and the supervisor suspected that the problem was with the polymer itself, and subsequent testing has borne this out.

"So, we all set? You figured it out?" Bill asks.

"Yeah. It was a weak batch."

11:16 Bill stops by the pump station. Here, a system of enormous vacuum extractors and hoppers sucks up, screens, and de-waters what he calls "the big stuff, all the really gross stuff" — grease from restaurants, plastics — which after being treated will be trucked out to landfills. He checks to see that nothing is hung up on the screens, and that the vacuum controls are set properly to handle today's flow, which he characterizes as "normal." The smell inside this particular building is nauseating.

11:30 Lunch.

12:40 Circling the island in his truck, Bill stops to check the chlorine analyzers located in a hut near a huge grid of canals and turbines churning with foamy wastewater. Here the water, which has already been treated and cleaned, is infused with chlorine to kill any remaining bacteria. Then it is shot through a nine-and-a-half mile tunnel, where it will be de-chlorinated once again and mixed with seawater before being released into the ocean. Maintaining the right chlorine level is crucial and is strictly spelled out in environmental permitting: too little is as bad as too much. Today's level — .49 — is perfect.

The turbine system also generates 3 MW of electricity, used to help power the plant.

1:15 Bill parks his truck outside the operations center, where his office is located. The sound of raised voices floats down the corridor: Bill walks in on an impassioned discussion.

"*Twenty-five bucks*? Are you *kidding* me?" one guy is saying to another.

Maintaining the right chlorine level is crucial and is strictly spelled out in environmental permitting: too little is as bad as too much.

"For what?" Bill asks.

The others look at him, their eyes flashing with amused outrage. "A lobster roll in Ogunquit."

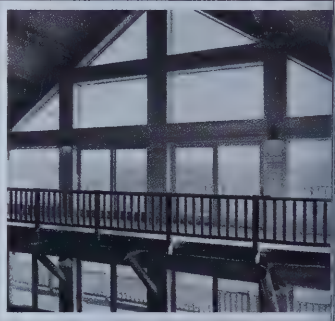
1:20 Bill sits down at the computer to check the weather forecast. He does this several times daily, paying attention not just to Boston, but to the entire region served by Deer Island. Rain, which sends water and sludge rushing down the storm drains of dozens of cities and towns, substantially increases inflow to the plant. With advance notice, Bill can plan to activate more tanks and adjust the chlorine level to meet the predicted surge in volume.

1:37 An incoming phone call informing Bill that the control readings on flow going into the south system may be intermittent for a while: work being done at the waste treatment plant on Nut Island will divert some of the usual flow. Thanks to this heads-up call, the unusual readings won't puzzle anyone; Bill can give the controller an explanation before the occurrence.

2:00 A meeting with the process control team to discuss improvements to the plant. Bill would like to upgrade the current vacuum-and-hopper system in the pump station. "During a normal day, two hoppers are adequate. But during a storm or a tank dump, I'd like to be able to use all three."

A process engineer answers that the

SHOWROOMS IN SOMERSET, SOUTHBORO, PEMBROKE, & WOBURN, MA



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vacuum controls can currently handle only two hoppers at a time. "But we can change that."

Bill: "And are we going to get vacuum analog signals on the PICS? Because that's important, so we can tell if the filters are plugged."

The drawings are unrolled on the conference table.

"It's shown here," one engineer says.

"But then it's crossed off," another notices.

"So let's make it official right now: it's something we want," Bill says.

The meeting moves along with confident energy, snappy and relaxed.

2:35 A meeting with the program manager for the process group about a scheduled upcoming calibration of the plant's cryogenic equipment. The Deer Island plant manufactures its own pure oxygen, which feeds the microbes that break down solids in the wastewater. While the cryo equipment is being serviced, the "bugs" will still need to be fed, so Bill and the program manager arrange to have oxygen trucked in.

3:02 Back in his office, Bill gets a phone call: gulls have been spotted eating out of an open dumpster. Bill asks the caller to confirm that the dumpster is now covered. He hangs up, looking disgusted. "Sea gulls. They're basically just rats with wings."

3:10 A maintenance man comes in. "Is it OK if we go with just one PRV tonight?"

There is a mechanical problem in one of the digesters, each of which has two pressure relief valves.

"We can allow that for one night, but it needs to be addressed tomorrow," Bill says.

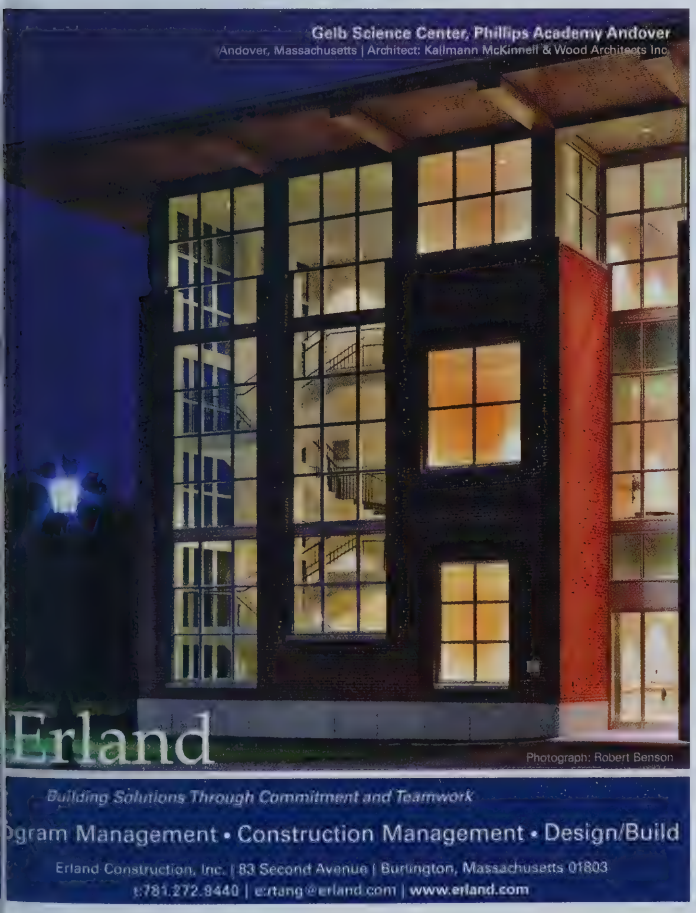
3:14 A shift manager consults with Bill about some PICS readouts, double-checking that a dry-weather bypass has not occurred. The plant's permitting allows the bypassing of certain regulations during a storm — the goal, in that case, is to deal with the water as quickly as possible in a way that is safe but that doesn't stand on too much ceremony. But a dry-weather bypass would be a permit violation. Bill and the manager bend over the print-out. "Almost," Bill says after a minute. "But no. We're fine."

3:20 Bill reviews reports completed by people on the last few shifts: notes on rounds, lab data. With its skilled and technologically adept staff, the plant is like a large hospital; at the same time, the plant itself is the patient, constantly monitored, with resultant tweaks in medication and protocol. Bill is on call 24/7, sleeping with his Blackberry on the bedside table; an alarm goes off if there's an emergency on Deer Island.

4:00 Bill gets ready to drive home, with a stop along the way at a health club to swim laps. Today was all about routine checks; today all the routine checks went well.

Before he leaves, he changes his shoes. ■

Joan Wickersham is a writer in Cambridge, Massachusetts.



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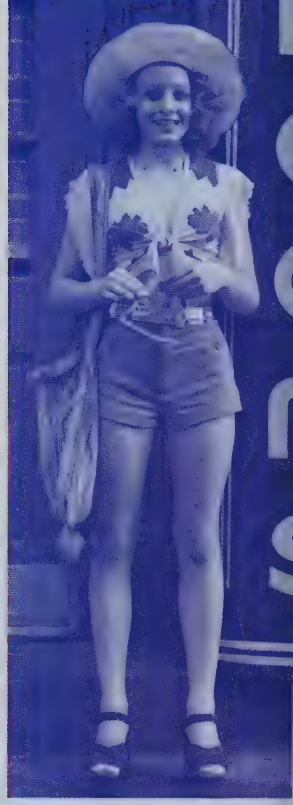

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British airways

Taking Stock

Boston has changed since 1976. Seven long-time observers tell *ArchitectureBoston* what the city has lost and gained.

Robert Turner

Crosscurrents of history, design, and politics swirled through Boston in 1976. We remember it as a different city, but how much has really changed?

It was the Bicentennial year. I can remember standing on a friend's roof in the North End as Queen Elizabeth disembarked from the *Britannia* and was driven down Hanover Street, a small pink hat bobbing through the crowded streets. It was the year Quincy Market reopened, a great city hugging its past and creating a vital public space.

But Boston did not only look backward in 1976. It was also the year the Hancock tower opened and planning began in earnest for the Southwest Corridor Park. Kevin White was inaugurated for his third term in 1976, after winning reelection narrowly over archrival Joe Timilty. Determined to avoid another close call, White tightened his political control over City Hall and the neighborhoods during his final two terms. Whether he was acting like "Mayor Deluxe" or "The Loner in Love with the City," as two columnists labeled him, White contributed to a vibrancy and dynamism that were palpable, at least downtown. The brilliant young staffers that White attracted, the glitter of events such as the Tall Ships visit, and the sense of community stimulated by

Clockwise from top left: Jane Pauley; USS *Constitution* during Bicentennial Tall Ships Parade; Jodie Foster in *Taxi Driver*; the Concorde's inaugural flight; Jimmy Carter and Ralph Nader; *Viking 1* lander on Mars; the Men's March Against Forced Busing in Charlestown; Sylvester Stallone in *Rocky*.

Participants

Robert Turner
1976: Op-ed columnist, *The Boston Globe*
2006: Deputy editor, editorial page, *The Boston Globe*

Robert Walsh
1976: Deputy director, Boston Redevelopment Authority (director, 1977-79)
2006: Chairman and CEO, R.F. Walsh Company, Boston

David Lee FAIA
1976: Principal, Stull Associates
2006: Partner, Stull and Lee; adjunct professor of planning and urban design, Harvard Graduate School of Design

Herbert Gleason
1976: Corporation counsel of the City of Boston
2006: Lawyer in private practice

Joan Goody FAIA
1976: Principal, Goody, Clancy; assistant professor, Harvard Graduate School of Design
2006: Principal, Goody Clancy

Susan Park
1976: Preservation activist in the South End
2006: President, Boston Preservation Alliance (South End resident)

Peter Kuttner FAIA
1976: Job-hunter (hired by Cambridge Seven Associates)
2006: President, Cambridge Seven Associates

the first First Night and other public celebrations served to pull the city together.

It is worth remembering, however, that Boston badly needed some good news in those days. Busing — forced busing to achieve racial balance — was in its second year, and the city was experiencing an accelerated flight of its middle class, especially white middle-class families with children. In April of 1976, a South Boston thug attacked Ted Landsmark, a black lawyer (now president of the Boston Architectural Center), with an American flag on City Hall Plaza. The photo earned a Pulitzer Prize; the city earned national condemnation.

The city today is more open, and in fact has become majority minority. Many neighborhoods have changed dramatically — East Boston, Charlestown, South Boston, and Jamaica Plain especially — but there are still very few places or events that provide common ground. After Downtown Crossing and the campus of UMass Boston, what else qualifies?

1976 was a time of big ideas and big people. Even so, a portrayal of Boston in 1976 as a city with a bold, coordinated vision, and the moxie to carry it out, may be a bit blurred by three decades' distance. White's poetry had more appeal, but Tom Menino's prose seems to get a fair amount done. Quincy Market was a feather for White, no doubt. But the other major projects were not the city's. The Southwest Corridor was primarily a state and MBTA venture, and the Hancock tower was of course private.

All three levels of government played a much greater role in development in the '70s, with significant public funding to underwrite projects. With the combined strength of its business and political communities, Boston was able to do reasonably well in the State House. Today, the state legislature and the administration are more attuned to the suburban vote than they are to the urban vote. Without state development dollars, without federal dollars, Mayor Menino's toolbox is much more limited than Mayor White's toolbox.

Then, as now, the Boston Redevelopment Authority was the city's planning and economic development agency, although its funding mechanism was different. The BRA received federal funds directly until the passing of the 1975 Housing and Community Development Act, which allocated funds to cities in the form of block grants, essentially making the BRA dependent upon the city. Significant projects of the era included completion of urban renewal projects such as infrastructure projects along the waterfront and in the South End; the auto-restricted zone at Downtown Crossing; and the 1977 acquisition of and planning for approximately 100 acres of land in the Charlestown Navy Yard, which had closed in 1974.

Because public funds are limited, and perhaps because people are disenchanted with government, there has been a change in the way the city works with developers. The Seaport plan is a good example of the difference. In the mid-'70s, the plan would

In 1976

Filming begins on George Lucas' *Star Wars*. The Tall Ships come to Boston in celebration of the Bicentennial. Clara Wainwright organizes the first First Night celebration. Queen Elizabeth II visits Boston. *Rocky*, starring Sylvester Stallone, is the top-grossing movie; other hits include: *King Kong; All the President's Men; Network; Carrie; Taxi Driver; and The Bad-News Bears*. *Passages* by Gail Sheehy and *Roots* by Alex Haley are *New York Times* bestsellers. The band Boston releases its debut album *Boston* with the hit "More than a Feeling."

Now, none of the most visible projects underway in Boston is being built by the city — an indicator of the city's loss of financial independence and clout. The Greenway, the development of the Fan Pier and Seaport District in South Boston, and Harvard's mammoth expansion into Allston are all going forward with considerable city input, but with little city initiative.

I question to what degree Boston was guided by a coordinated vision in 1976. But whatever history's answer, we can yearn for more today.

Robert Walsh

The development world in Boston in 1976 was very different: few people had much appetite for investing in the city. One of the most significant reasons was the city's property tax assessing practices, which could be described as unpredictable, if not whimsical. Equally significant was the simple fact that there wasn't much demand. For example, when 60 State Street was built — it was completed in 1977 — it had no tenants; the developers even considered converting it to a hotel. In the '60s and '70s, speculative buildings were not yet the norm, and most of the significant office towers were built as corporate headquarters by local banks and insurance companies.

have been developed by the city, not the developer, and the result would have been a series of smaller parcels — a very different feel. The city now relies on developers to create the constituency for their projects — something that used to happen through the public planning process. Because of this, development teams today include a whole new group of people whose job is to build community support for the project.

Boston is no longer a headquarters city; we're a stop on a career path for a business executive. That doesn't mean a death knell for the city. It means the strength of the traditional business community is somewhat diminished. But we have an untapped resource in the strength of the city: its institutions. Part of their primary mission is public responsibility. The challenge for the political establishment is to find a way to engage the educational and medical establishments in the civic affairs of the city.

David Lee FAIA

In 2006, Boston is contending with the development of a linear park that is the vestige of a removed highway. In 1976, the city was contending with the planning of a linear park that was the vestige of a failed plan to run Interstate 95 through the heart of

the city. The differences between the two projects underscore some of the ways we have changed as a city.

Contrary to common perceptions, the heyday of citizen activism and advocacy was in the 1970s; you could say that the '60s really happened in the '70s. Community development was the cornerstone of that era and helped to change the city's approach to the Southwest Corridor project. Citizen activists convinced Governor Sargent that running a highway through their neighborhoods would be a mistake; the project was effectively killed in 1970, leaving a swath of cleared land running through the South End, the St. Botolph neighborhood, Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain. With its defeat, Sargent backed a proposal for a new Orange Line and park system. Even so, the project didn't really gain momentum until people began to understand that the Southwest Corridor project was not a transportation project, but a community development project with a transportation component. Once they began to look at it from that perspective, they could see the need to embrace a range of issues — architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture; housing; social and community issues; economic development. The neighborhoods, which at that point weren't really cohesive communities, started to work together and coalesced around this set of issues. Having stopped the highway, they didn't just go home; they stayed to figure out alternatives that would best benefit the most people. That new shared sense of purpose was responsible for the success of the project and the fact that all of those neighborhoods experienced substantial capital investment and are much nicer places today.

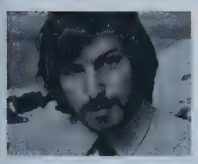
My sense is that the Southwest Corridor project engaged the neighbors more than the Greenway project has. Of course, the site ran through a series of neighborhoods. The Greenway runs through the downtown and only hits the edges of the North End and Chinatown neighborhoods at its ends. The process seems to have been driven much more by downtown business interests and the political tug-of-war between the state and the city.

But there is also a different attitude among the participants. The people who were involved in the Southwest Corridor project had a sense of something much larger than their own turf; they were conscious of the fact they were engaged in a significant act of city-building. The Greenway project feels more parochial; abutters are fighting for their adjacent parcels and seem much less willing to compromise for the sake of the whole. Perhaps that's because a lot of them are veterans of earlier battles and are simply older, more tired, maybe wiser; maybe it's because people are more cynical about government. But the idealism that fueled a lot of what was accomplished on the Southwest Corridor is gone.

Herbert Gleason

1976 was a tense political time, but it was also a period of effervescent democracy, a reaction to extreme arrogance on the part of the government and decision-makers. It was preceded, of course, by the Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the urban renewal programs. Then in 1974, Judge Arthur Garrity issued his order to desegregate the Boston schools. The tale of the School Committee's behavior toward the minority community that is described in his decision is shocking to read, but the immediate and immense opposition to his order affected the social and political climate of the city for years. Some extraordinary people emerged from that experience, however, people who were prepared to engage in other forms of public activism, contributing to a vibrant climate of civic engagement.

At the same time, Kevin White created a number of initiatives within the neighborhoods. He supported community health centers to counter the continuing loss of medical practitioners to the suburbs. The administration also promoted "community schools," organizing programs for youth, the elderly, and the neighborhoods that were based in school buildings. Deputy Mayor Kathy Kane was in charge of cultural affairs, promoting the arts and citywide events like Summerthing and First Night. And most famously, Kevin established the "little city halls" — an attempt to bring city services more directly to residents.

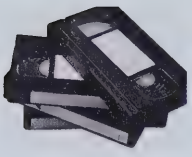


Apple Computer Company is formed by Steve Jobs (left) and Steve Wozniak. The Ramones launch the punk-rock phenomenon with their first album, *Ramones*. *The Eagles Greatest Hits* compilation becomes the first album in history to be certified platinum. The avant-garde opera *Einstein on the Beach*, by Robert Wilson and Philip Glass, premieres. The first medical infusion pump is invented by Dean Kamen. The Cray-1, the first commercially developed supercomputer, is invented by Seymour Cray. The first 4.6 miles of the Washington, DC subway opens

Despite those initiatives, Kevin was always ambivalent about uppity citizens. He tried to push things through, often successfully, despite opposition. But he lost a significant battle in 1974 with the defeat of the Park Plaza project — a case study in effective citizen involvement and activism. Park Plaza taught citizen activists that they had a voice and that they could prevail and opened the way to growing public participation in the development process.

Ray Flynn succeeded Kevin in 1984 and had a soothing influence on the city. There was enormous neighborhood opposition to the New England Life building in the '80s, but by that time, city government had learned how to deal with protest. Objections to various projects since then have been relatively ineffective — Fenway Park was the last victory — and people seem to have tired of fighting to no avail.

City government today has learned to be less arrogant and certainly less provocative. But one could also say that we — the citizens — have gone limp. We no longer have the civic vitality we had in the '60s, '70s, and even into the '80s. Young people come out of school burdened by debt; they need to find good jobs and hang onto them. Mayor Menino has been very skillful in keeping the neighborhoods happy. Driving around the neighborhoods, one can see that people have invested in their properties and one



Betamax and VHS VCRs are released. A little-known company called Microsoft is officially registered with the Office of the Secretary of the State of New Mexico. **The Viking 2 spacecraft lands on Mars and takes the first close-up, color photos of the planet's surface.** The first commercial Concorde flight takes off. **The first laser printer is introduced by IBM.** Ray Kurzweil introduces the first reading machine for the blind. **CB radio popularity peaks.** CN Tower is completed in Toronto: at 1,815 feet, it is still in 2006 the tallest structure in the world.

feels a sense of confidence in the future of the city, which we didn't have 30 years ago. But there's also a certain complacency. We're running out of civic leaders, and I wonder where our future leaders will come from.

Joan Goody FAIA

One of the significant changes in Boston over the last 30 years is housing — not only the obvious extreme rise in the cost of housing, but also changes in who is building it and what they are building. In the mid-1970s, my firm was designing housing for the Planning Office of the Archdiocese of Boston, headed by a wonderful priest, Michael Groden. He had decided that the Church's excess property — such as surplus cemetery land and unused seminaries — would make good sites for affordable housing. We worked with him on four sites. It was a long process, but state funding and subsidies were available, and we all had a feeling of real power to change the living environment.

A number of housing initiatives characterized the era. Housing was on people's minds: there was a need, and it fit the political mood of the country. Architects were familiar with the federal Operation Breakthrough housing program in the '60s, and most of the design schools had some focus on housing. State-subsidized elderly housing, the so-called "667 program," was transformed by a series of architectural competitions, the brainchild of Steve Demos and Tadhg Sweeney, which accomplished the dual goal of promoting innovative design and attracting talented architects to that program. Housing was closely tied to the social activism of that time; we began planning for both the Tent City project (mixed-income housing on a cleared urban renewal site where community activists had pitched tents) and Harbor Point (the mixed-income conversion of the Columbia Point low-income housing project) in the mid-'70s, although Tent City was not completed until 1988 and Harbor Point until 1990.

Harbor Point was one of the progenitors of today's federal Hope VI program, which was established in 1992 to "eradicate severely distressed public housing." Much of the recent housing work in our office has been Hope VI planning projects; the clients are cities rather than developers — another change for us. But it is no longer as large a part of our portfolio; more of our architectural work now is for university and college clients.

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The *MacNeil-Lehrer Report* (left) premieres on PBS. John Hancock tower in Boston is completed. Water Tower Place in Chicago is completed. Alvar Aalto (born 1898) dies. Barbara Walters becomes the first female nightly network news anchor. Jane Pauley debuts on *The Today Show*. West Point, Annapolis, and the Air Force Academy open admissions to women. Representative Henry Hyde attaches an abortion exclusion clause (and continues to do so annually) to the federal appropriations bill, prohibiting federal Medicaid money to be used for abortion.

Interestingly, the universities are now big players in Boston's housing scene, with their recent focus on dormitory construction. The city wants dorms to alleviate pressure on other units — dorms have the added advantage that they don't require parking — and the universities have discovered that new apartment-style dorms can be profit centers.

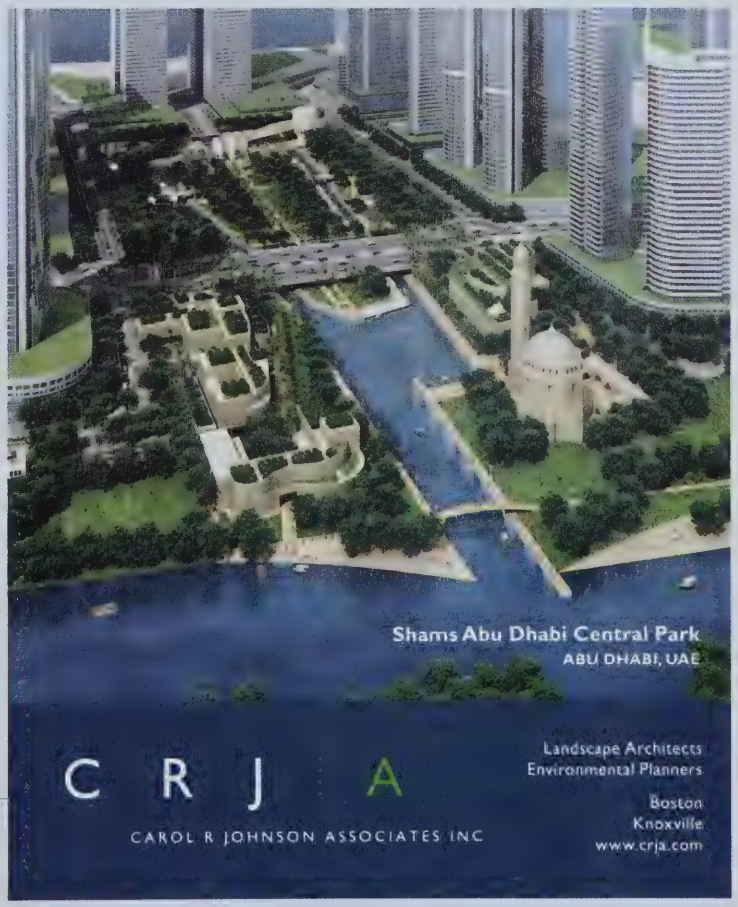
But of course, the real focus today is the luxury condo market, both conversions and new construction. I give Boston credit that it insists on a certain number of affordable units in every complex. But it's sad that in a time of real need, the only way the city can find money for affordable housing is to squeeze it out of developers, either through linkage fees on downtown projects, or as a set-aside from developers who want to build market-rate units. Where are the state funds? Where are the federal funds? Our priorities are different, but the need is still there.

Susan Park

The South End that I moved to in 1967 was a down-at-the-heels, moribund neighborhood — like many Boston neighborhoods. By the mid-'70s, it was still on the edge, but change was coming: $90 million of federal urban renewal money was being invested in the South End alone, and that was matched or exceeded by private funds invested in rehabbing the housing stock.

The neighborhood had been rediscovered by people whose parents had fled to the suburbs in the '40s and the '50s, people who felt the suburbs they'd grown up in were vapid. The housing stock, as in much of the city, was solid but run-down. But people returned and raised children, sending them to public schools — in spite of busing. Busing was a big issue, of course, but less so in the South End, which was already the largest racially mixed neighborhood in the city. We had a black population — originally Pullman car porters who lived along the railroad tracks — and there were Chinese, Syrians, and Lebanese living on Shawmut Avenue. So it was a polyglot, and it worked because people were investing in it. People got involved in neighborhood politics and in the schools. They took pride in their neighborhood; they cleaned their streets and sidewalks.

The nature of that investment has changed. People in the '60s and '70s were investing energy as well as money in making the community succeed. Now, because the community has succeeded,



Chairman Mao Zedung (left) dies at the age of 82 (Deng Xiaopeng succeeds him two years later). A movement to repeal gay rights ordinances in Dade County, Florida, is led by singer Anita Bryant. Ebola is first discovered in Zaire. The first outbreak of Legionnaire's disease kills 29 at the American Legion convention in Philadelphia. The federal hourly minimum wage is set at $2.30 an hour. George W. Bush is arrested and fined for driving under the influence of alcohol. Jimmy Carter defeats incumbent Gerald Ford; his term begins in January, 1977.

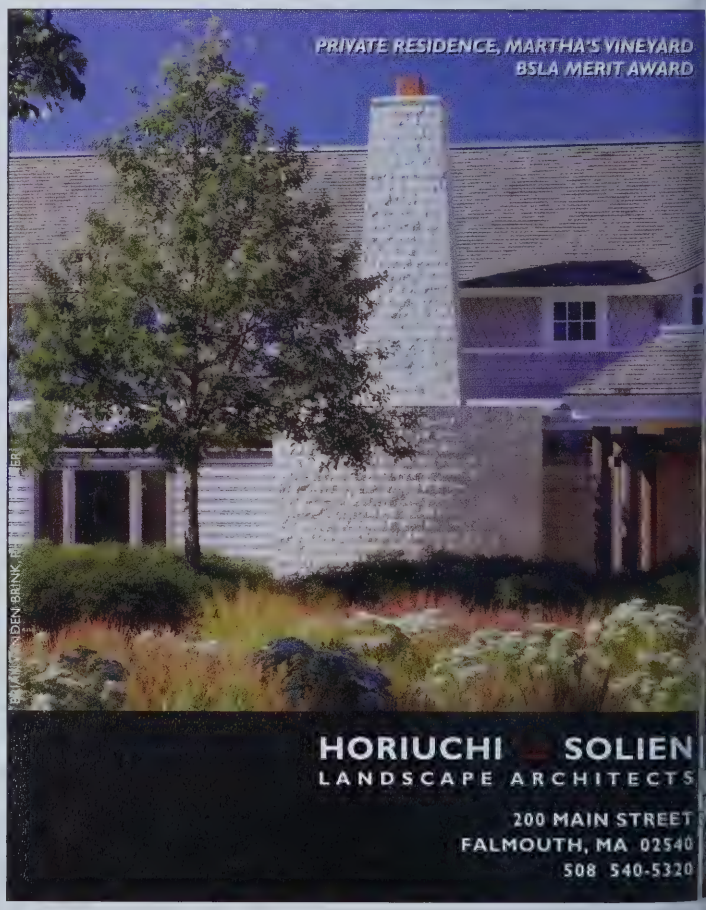
people are only investing money. If you buy a $2 million house and your taxes are $12,000 a year, you figure the city should pick up the litter. The same cycle happened to Beacon Hill and Back Bay, and the result was the same sort of civic lethargy. Even worse, many people now have second houses, and their hearts are at the summer place or the weekend house. And that has been a recent, terrible change in the South End, because we have had a great sense of community over the last 30 years. That said, organizations in the city are raising more money for charity than ever before. Staggering amounts of money. But money can't buy personal attention, input, concern, commitment. This is a stunning change in the civic life of the city. That's the *real* "new urbanism."

The political strength of the neighborhoods in the '70s depended entirely on who your city councilor was. Mayor White was autocratic and ruled with an iron fist. Ray Flynn, following him, was a weak mayor, but he did give free rein to Steven Coyle as director of the BRA. Coyle had a strong sense of the neighborhoods and empowered citizens to have a say in their future. We have since returned to a more centralized, downtown view of what's best for the neighborhoods. Even so, Menino has been an excellent mayor, probably more intimately familiar with the city than either of his predecessors.

Boston has a special sense of place, and when you live in the South End, you understand it. You have a sense of history, of other people who came before you and contributed to this place.

Peter Kuttner FAIA

I came to Boston in 1976 from Ann Arbor. I was job-hunting, just a couple years out of graduate school, and Boston even then had a reputation for a dynamic architectural community. I arrived on a perfect October day; Quincy Market had just recently opened. When I got back to Michigan, everyone asked what I'd thought of Boston. I remember exclaiming, "The people are so friendly and it's so beautiful and there are all these wonderful public spaces downtown." And they all said, "*What*? Where did *you* go?" Boston in 1976 was defined nationally by the busing crisis. Now it's nationally defined by the Big Dig. That's an improvement — I'd rather be embarrassed by excesses due to technological chutzpah than by the excesses of an intolerant society.



The Liberian tanker Argo Merchant sinks 27 miles off Nantucket, spilling 7.7 million gallons of oil. **The "Dirty War" begins in Argentina as the military junta in power persecutes and kills thousands of dissidents.** The construction permit for a nuclear power station in Seabrook, New Hampshire, is granted; full operation does not begin until 1990. **The National Academy of Science issues a report on CFC (chlorofluorocarbon) gasses warning of damage to the ozone layer.** The world is still one year away from the introduction of Post-it notes and the McDonald's Happy Meal.

One of the first things the folks at Cambridge Seven suggested I do was to see *Where's Boston?* — the multimedia show that the firm had created for the Bicentennial. We've recently revisited it, because of a request from the Chamber of Commerce to consider updating it. The change in the city is astonishing. The original *Where's Boston?* focused on the tribalism of the neighborhoods. Chinese, Italian, African-American, Brahmin, Irish — they were discrete places, very different, and instantly recognizable. Today, the neighborhoods are much more porous, more homogenized. It's both a positive and a negative change. Their drive for diversity is positive, but it's been accompanied in many places by gentrification and a loss of neighborhood identity.

Boston's sense of itself has changed, too. Boston in 1976 had a "me, too" personality. Its peer cities were Dallas or Indianapolis. Today it has an easy confidence. Its cohorts are Chicago, New York, LA. Thirty years ago, the big event in town was the Marathon — so much so that the script for *Where's Boston?* was structured around it. Now there are many events, offering something for everybody. It sometimes seems that the energy that once went into politics and activism is now harnessed by festivals, events, concerts, exhibitions, and, of course, sports.

Nonprofits play a larger role in the city, not only because they are the sponsors of many of the events that are part of the life of the city, but also because people are realizing that with the loss of our large local corporations, we are fundamentally a community of not-for-profit institutions. Some of them are stepping up, maybe not with the cash of the corporations, but with a different kind of optimism. They have different kinds of assets. They own more land and buildings than the corporations did and they're here for the long haul. They're more willing to talk. I suspect that Harvard moving into Allston will have much deeper community conversations than did the developer of Copley Place.

Some people lament the loss of The Vault, that mysterious business group that was always credited with getting things done in the city. I don't regret it at all. The not-for-profits have their own missions, but they tend to be more driven by consensus and dependence on the community. And their roots are deep. ■

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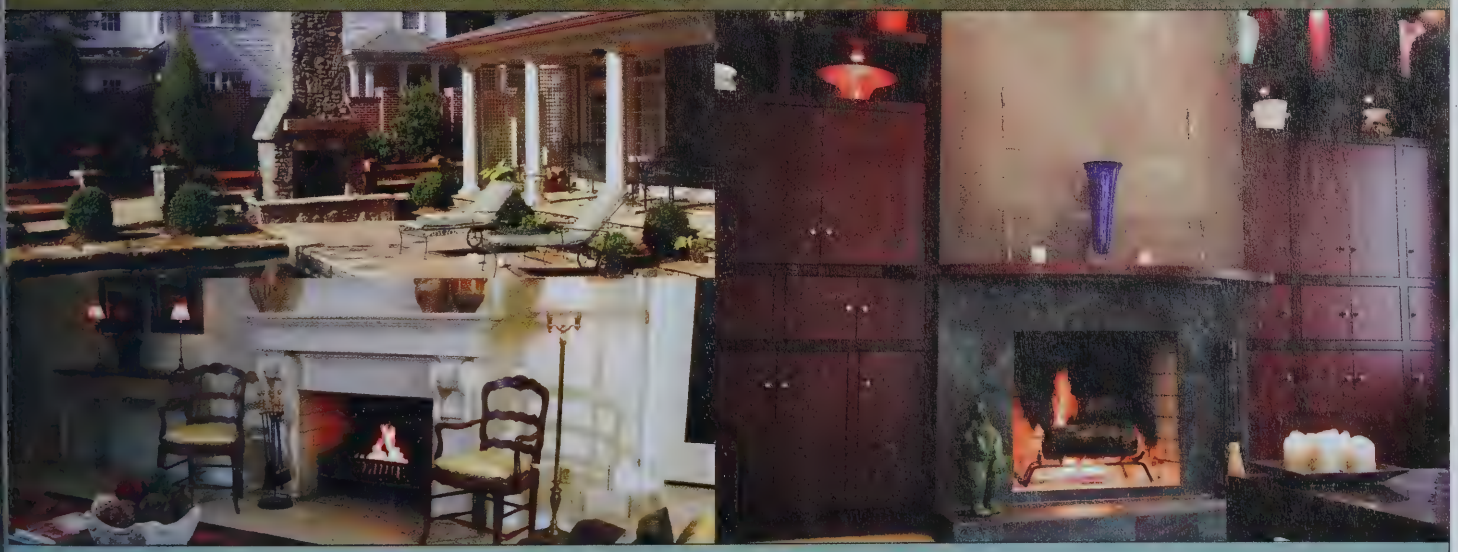

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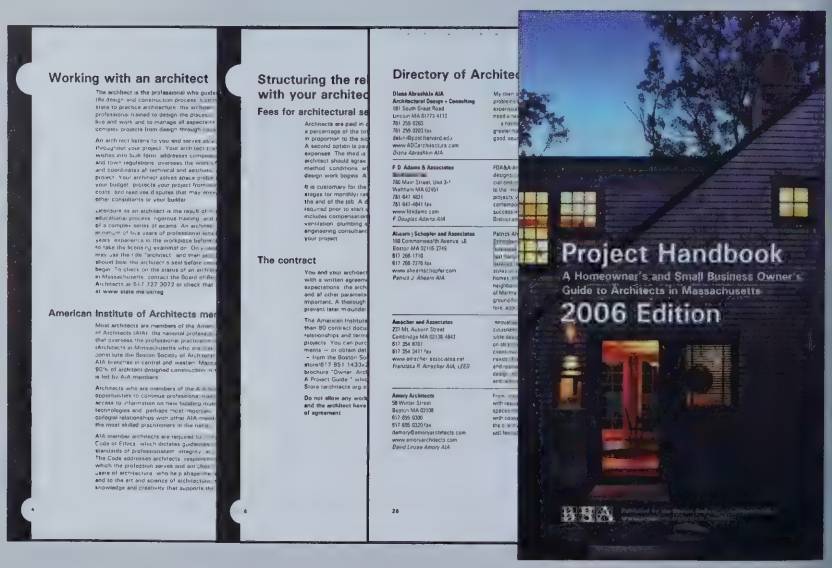

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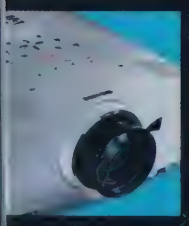

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AFTER THE BULLDOZERS

Preservation architecture in the Bicentennial Generation and beyond

By Henry Moss AIA

It all began in 1876, when Philadelphia hosted a Centennial Celebration that launched the Colonial Revival. We work hard to invent our traditions and perhaps even harder to protect their political efficacy; the Colonial Revival convincingly addressed both needs. A decade after the Civil War and three decades after Irish immigrants first swarmed out of steerage onto the piers of East Boston and Lower Manhattan, the Centennial became a touchstone for the descendants of early America who found themselves increasingly surrounded by newcomers unschooled in the hagiography of American Revolutionary heroism — newcomers who could only be assimilated by learning the values of the Founders through images, stories, and of course,

After years of demolition and urban renewal clearances in the '50s and '60s, many Bostonians embraced the preservation movement in the 1970s. Left to right: Central Artery; the West End before demolition; West End after demolition (views to northwest and to southwest).

architecture. A continuing tide of immigration supported the Colonial Revival well into the 20th century, when the continuing impulse to preserve and expand the mythology of the early Republic spawned the preservation movement.

One hundred years after the Philadelphia celebration, our Bicentennial aspirations sprang from a very different medium: the rich nightsoil of demolition, bulldozers, and road building, cities gutted by white flight, racial tensions, dimming factories, and urban renewal. Demolition of Boston's West End and of blocks along the route of the Central Artery subtracted 1,500 historic buildings in two nearly simultaneous campaigns; in 1956, aerial views of Boston resembled Allied bombardiers' photographs of Dresden. The advocacy of civic leaders, community troublemakers, and architects who loved their city was pitched against the continuing postwar and post-Depression commitment to economic reconfiguration and the infrastructure changes necessary to accomplish it.

By 1976, the preservation movement had evolved beyond the urge to protect an often imaginary past of tranquil continuity. A few generations before, the National Park Service had been involved in the fantasy-based reconstruction of George Washington's birthplace — a house form and site that had scant documentary or archeological evidence. That adolescent agency matured to become a respected cultural resource. Armed with both the mission and legal authority to reveal and protect original historic material, it provided sound guidance toward a more curatorial approach for individual structures and urban places, and a fine-art restorer's commitment to authenticity. Bostonians needed this help; it arrived too late for the West End.

Demolition and wholesale displacement had prepared our mental pathways for the concept of "gentrification," introduced by Ruth Glass in 1964. Vulnerable populations in American cities were often housed in run-down historic buildings, assembled in complex neighborhoods built 100 years before as village-like clusters of houses, shops, and cottage industries, then gradually abandoned to waves of new immigrants. The social costs of both demolition and improvement began to register politically.

In Boston, some illuminating initiatives in adaptive reuse introduced the possibility of a reality-based recycling of urban structures with minimal displacement: Tim Anderson's Prince Spaghetti Factory (1965); Carl Koch's Lewis Wharf (1965); Anderson, Notter's Old Boston City Hall (1969); Simeon Bruner's Piano Craft Guild artists' housing (1972); and Benjamin Thompson Associates' Faneuil Hall Marketplace (1971-1976). These bold projects demonstrated that radical reuse of existing buildings could add life to the city while capitalizing on the natural attributes of a "found architecture."

The idea that recycling buildings is a viable alternative to demolition was reinforced when the federal government

Bold projects demonstrated that radical reuse of existing buildings could add life to the city while capitalizing on the natural attributes of a "found architecture."

introduced its Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program in 1976. It was spectacularly successful. The Department of the Interior soon realized that taxpayers' dollars might bankroll destructive alterations to historic buildings and rapidly produced the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. An incisive primer for hungry developers and hesitant architects, these guidelines provided a nationally applicable, astylar framework for design decisions and continue to help us reconcile economic pressures with architectural opportunity and with the retention of original building fabric.

Look at what else happened in Boston during the years clustered around the Bicentennial: the Housing and Community Act (1974) urged municipalities to consider restoration rather than demolition during urban renewal; the closing of the Charlestown Navy Yard (1974); the creation of the Greater Boston Convention and Visitors' Bureau (1974); the establishment of the Lowell National Cultural Park (1974); the founding of the Boston Landmarks Commission (1975); the opening of the National Trust for Historic Preservation Northeast regional office (1975); the founding of the Boston National Historic Park (1974); the founding of the Boston Preservation Alliance (1978); the transformation of Historic Boston Incorporated into a preservation revolving fund; the founding of Boston By Foot (1976); and the Boston Society of Architects' Preservation '76 conference and tradeshow (a precursor of BuildBoston and a direct response to the Bicentennial).

This period also saw the development of technical centers devoted to architectural conservation. The National Park Service and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) Conservation Center experimented with historic-paint analyses to reveal archaeological strata as well as to recapture original colors more accurately; developed masonry-preservation techniques; investigated methods for plaster conservation; and documented regional and period variations in both high-style and vernacular construction. The field of historic preservation began to become more professional, with degree courses addressing materials science, cultural history, and the growing administrative roles of preservationists.

Mostly, this happened alongside the business of architecture. Despite increasing public, political, and technical support for preservation, the architecture profession was curiously non-committal. Most architects identified work with historic buildings as necessary and respectable, but an esoteric problem-solving practice marginal to the core businesses of new-building design and urban renewal. Some architecture firms developed preservation skills to address the complexities of existing buildings and historic contexts, especially in terms of public-permitting obstacles, tax-incentive criteria, and public opposition to the formal outcomes of postwar design. While architects occasionally found that expertise with historic structures created opportunities to design new buildings — as when work on an historic library led to a new library commission — many others found the preservation label limiting.

Today, 30 years later, preservation addresses a far broader agenda. Buildings decried by previous generations are now recast as architecture that deserves protection. Even after the horror of 9/11, post-Bicentennial preservation efforts have been far less haunted by fears that something essentially American is slipping away than they were earlier in the 20th century, and far more motivated by the desire to reinforce the livability of urban neighborhoods and to recognize the formal and social contributions of the generations that introduced Modern architecture — not to mention Americans who were previously uncelebrated, even unrecognized, in history books. There has been a growing insistence that preservation ideas combine curatorial skills with a city-building agenda, architectural conservation with new sustainability outcomes. Practitioners and citizens search for better tools to manage the dynamic content of historic landscapes, improve energy expenditure inside old walls, integrate new buildings into old streetscapes, recognize the significance of tract housing and our automobile culture, rehabilitate vast parkways and other infrastructure, and exploit the visual juxtaposition of disparate styles and colliding temporal references.

Although there are more skilled preservation technicians and more trained planners and administrators today, the significance and contextual value of many of the historic resources that are threatened have become less obvious to the public, the content of debates more arcane. New advocacy and research groups such as DOCOMOMO-US/New England (founded in 2001) present arguments in favor of protection for postwar buildings that even local historic commissions ignore and surrounding neighbors only tolerate. While the curatorial preoccupations of previous decades are being shifted to new building types, such as 1950s curtain-walled towers or vast asylum complexes, preservation nonprofits have started to concentrate on ways to maximize the leverage of each building that is transformed from a local eyesore to an example of some aspect of our national heritage.

With curatorial constraints better understood today, the overriding questions are how our preservation initiatives can stimulate economic activity, invigorate street life, and improve both social cohesion and property values while avoiding displacement of

The early, unhealthy distinctions between new-building architects and old-building architects still linger, in spite of such high-profile examples as Venturi and Scott Brown, or Carlo Scarpa.

affordable housing and commercial space. People have begun to accept that historic preservation is always about handling change.

But never mind all that — the greater threat to our historical resources is frequently the architecture profession itself. Most architects remain ill-equipped intellectually and artistically to make creative and insightful design responses to existing buildings. Certainly their training avoids the issue. Students and teachers in architecture programs and preservation degree courses almost never confront design problems together. The early, unhealthy distinctions between new-building architects and old-building architects still linger, in spite of such high-profile examples as Venturi and Scott Brown, or Carlo Scarpa.

Reconciling conflicts between new and old is largely left to regulatory agencies, especially historical commissions. Their role is difficult and somewhat complicated by the realization that the Modernist ethic led many architects to strip and degrade Victorian houses when they took charge of renovations. Postmodernism was not much better; never archeological in intent, it may even have promoted equal damage to historic interiors. Historical commissioners are rightfully distrustful of our confident arguments on behalf of contrasting aesthetic approaches in historic settings. It is difficult to design these well and especially difficult for design reviewers to be confident when nuances of scale and treatment are so significant and our Powerpoint/Photoshop presentations are so abstract, our explanations so tangential.

By diverting our attention from these difficult design problems in architecture school, by leaving historic buildings to a specialist clique within the profession, by believing that an informed appreciation of existing buildings is inconsistent with formal innovation, we often relinquish authority over critical architectural proposals to local commissions that are poorly equipped to comment on contemporary design.

Boston and Cambridge are frequently exceptions. The Cambridge Historical Commission worked to promote sensitive contemporary alterations to Josep Lluís Sert's Holyoke Center. It similarly supported architect Robert Olson's proposal to retain the visual statement of the vast plate-glass windows that Benjamin Thompson had inserted in his 1961 modernization of Harvard's Boylston Hall. Other commissioners in other cities would probably insist on reconstructing windows from the 1850s.

2006 is a time when there seem to be other glimmerings of new ways to look at history and respond to historic structures, especially to retain the superimposed evidence of multiple generations. These deserve to be encouraged. Preservation architects need to reenter the design continuum, and other architects should become more sensitive to the specific character of existing buildings that are part of their projects. The division between architects adept at work with historic buildings and those who concentrate on new structures is debilitating for the profession and aesthetically stifling for the communities where we build. By the Tricentennial in 2076, that division should be gone, a quaint artifact of 20th-century cultural confusion.

[illegible] (AIA) is a principal of Brown/COX Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and co-chair of the AIA Historic Resources Committee.

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Five projects that left their mark on the '70s shaped the urban environment and the people who created it. After 30 years, these projects still matter. Can the same be said of Cabbage Patch Dolls and consciousness-raising groups? »

The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

Hugh Stubbins and Associates, 1970-76

I am tempted to say that this is a perfect building. Perfect not for an alleged universal applicability. Perfect in its uniqueness and oddity. Perfect — and this is what we can learn from it today — in embracing engineering possibilities without resorting to cold abstraction.

As a sign of the strange dichotomy in which Boston has been stuck — a dichotomy pinpointed in such slogans as "quaint *and* progressive" — Boston has one of the most outstanding skylines in the country, despite its deep suspicion of tall buildings and its seeming insistence that towers be hidden away behind veneers of townhouses. Its skyline is not a mass, like Manhattan's, but a collection of individual buildings, perceptible as such not only from a distance but also from multiple points while moving through the city. To speak in the urban theory of the day: these buildings supply Rossi's necessary monuments within the city's texture, while refuting Rowe and Koetter's "crisis of the object." Boston's highrises are a gang of cool guys. Not in the least arrogant, but cool: self confident, certain of their place, enjoying their stand.

The Federal Reserve Bank is one of the most outstanding of these guys. Or gals. I'm not quite sure of its gender, but the fact that I consider it is just one of its qualities.

The Fed resides in a strange, abstract anthropomorphism. The Fed is the guy (or gal?) at the corner. Striking a pose on its two feet, a little stiff but reliable, watching not only the corner of South Station and the city it serves, but also the world beyond the water. Ears above (extensions of core services), alert yet never panicked. Level forehead (mechanical floor) and matching low belt (also mechanical floor). Long, elegant brows over the watchful eyes, allowing continuous eye contact by shielding the glare from the glass (the Fed never shuts itself off with total reflection or complete opacity). Finally, a taut skin that brings this all together, its personality subtly shifting with changes in humidity, vantage point, and time of day.

The building suggests something familiar without quoting anything specific. The building celebrates engineering (bridging, suspending), yet technology never becomes its motif. The building is about surface and material, yet it moves beyond the minimalist box.

My sympathy for the Fed is heightened by the awareness that it has a sibling. The Citicorp building stands on dainty flamingo legs on its own corner in Midtown Manhattan, equally perfect in its oddness, top-heaviness, and taut skin.

Why the cheapness, the tinsel-like gaudiness of recent arrivals to the gang? Why does it seem impossible to build such perfection in Boston now, 30 years later?

Susanne Schindler works as a designer with Utile, Inc., writes regularly for architectural publications, and is a lecturer at Northeastern University.

Waterfront Park, Atlantic Avenue

Sasaki Associates, 1976

The late Hideo Sasaki called his firm's design for Boston's Waterfront Park "a window on the sea." It certainly was that. As the final destination on the "Walk to the Sea" that guided pedestrians from City Hall Plaza through Quincy Market to the waterfront, it was the first public space in downtown Boston to offer a visual and physical link to the harbor. The Boston Redevelopment Authority commissioned Waterfront Park (renamed Christopher Columbus Park in the early 1980s) in 1974 with the stipulation that it be ready for the Bicentennial and the arrival of the Tall Ships. It was to be a companion piece to Quincy Market and the New England Aquarium, and an amenity for the established community of the North End and new residents of the converted wharf buildings.

The design for the park broke up the 4.5-acre site into a series of intimate spaces edged by tree allées, shrub borders, and low seating walls. The over-scaled trellis structure soon became a Boston landmark. The water-edge plaza with its cobblestone surface edged with granite bollards and heavy chains evoked the maritime history of the site. One of the most promising areas in the park's interior was an "outdoor room" screened by high plantings that made a setting for neighborhood bocce games. Starting with its role as a viewing area for the Tall Ships, Waterfront Park became a favorite site for that ubiquitous event loved by local interests and tourist bureaus: the urban festival. This park was the first of what became a distinctive landscape type: from New York to Baltimore to Charleston, the public was reconnected to long-abandoned waterfronts. Waterfront Park won many awards from the design profession, culminating in the 1999 Medallion Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Ironically, the Medallion Award signaled the end of the integrity of the Sasaki design. Waterfront Park suffered from a common park syndrome: initial capital investment, years of deferred maintenance and, as criticism crescendoes, another capital investment in a major redesign. Many park designs of the 1970s that incorporate the idea of intimate spaces with limited sight lines are perceived as unsafe. Whether one defines the changes at Waterfront Park as problems solved, features reprogrammed, or an entirely new design, the process has been so complex that it might well serve as a case study for landscape architecture students.

Boston's waterfront has been in a continuous process of transformation. The land under Waterfront Park and Atlantic Avenue was created in the late 19th century with soil from Fort Hill. Adaptation and reinvention will continue to characterize the area. Time will tell if the new iteration of Waterfront Park will match or surpass the civic contribution of Sasaki's original design.

Phyllis Andersen is a landscape historian in Boston.

Asaroton

Mags Harries, 1976

In the fall of 1976, after loading up on the intoxicating abundance of inexpensive produce at Boston's Haymarket, my housemates and I would spend the next week racing to cook it — the food was often not as fresh as we had thought. One weekend at Haymarket, I glanced down, my eye caught by the surreal sight of fresh lettuce leaves fallen on top of a bronze lettuce leaf embedded in the paving. Investigating more, I discovered cast-bronze flowers, corncobs, a wooden box of loose strawberries. Art in the street — what a great city, I thought.

Years later I learned this artwork, created by artist Mags Harries, had been chosen by Boston to celebrate the Bicentennial. Its title, *Asaroton*, refers to an ancient floor mosaic depicting an unswept floor scattered with fallen food, an image so popular that it was copied throughout the early Roman world.

How did bronzed garbage come to mark the Bicentennial? In 1975, the Massachusetts Bicentennial Commission invited 100 artists to propose ideas for prominent sites around the city. Harries chose Haymarket, a site not on the list. In the enigmatic way of competitions, her project was selected…and then the difficulty began. Many people were embarrassed that the Bicentennial would be represented by garbage; others worried that people would trip on it. Hostility abounded: city councilors said they would not spend money to celebrate trash. But Harries did the legwork to get approvals, used her entire fee to pay the casting costs, and convinced Caughlin Construction to donate the installation.

When the 55-foot-long work was completed, the vendors were not pleased, seeing it as symbolic of their demise. People from South Boston picketed for removal of a bronzed newspaper headline about school busing; their lawyers visited Harries' studio. The city wanted to ignore the project; there was not even an opening event.

Today the work has been refurbished thanks to the Central Artery Project. Cut out of the street during construction, it was reinstalled into crosswalks at Hanover and Blackstone Streets. Parts were re-cast from original molds with additions that speak of change over 30 years — portobello mushrooms, flattened water bottles, a broken cell phone, and newspaper articles about Kerry and Bush.

The artwork creates a narrative that is discovered over time, to which people respond in a very unguarded way. This wonderful project doesn't seem so avant-garde now. In the last 30 years, the celebration of the everyday has become a staple in the creation of public art. This is not altogether good — we need public artwork that inspires us to stand on top of the past, to look up, to imagine new futures. But in 1976, *Asaroton* showed us an alternative to the corporate icons that then defined public art.

Ross Miller is a public artist developing artwork for Public School Outdoor Classrooms, Central Artery greenspace, and the Ancient Fishweir Project on Boston Common.

Yale Center for British Art

Louis Kahn, 1973-1977

Entrances to Louis Kahn's buildings are usually irritatingly difficult to find, and the Yale Center for British Art is no exception. In fact, a pedestrian strolling down Chapel Street in New Haven would have no idea that he was even walking next to the museum, as the street front has been given over to shops in a commendable urban gesture.

In the fall of 1977, I was that pedestrian, although fully aware that the new Kahn building had opened in just this spot six months earlier. As a first-year architecture student, I had already visited the Kahn building across the street, and had struggled to feel the thrill of its much-lauded triangular honeycomb ceiling structure.

Eventually I walked by all the shops and discovered at the far corner of the block that the first floor was cut deeply into the building; finding the door in the rear of that gloomy recess, I walked inside. Blinkingly bright sunlight poured in from four stories up, bathing the potted trees and light oak walls in intense and warm light. And the air — the air was warm and humid and dense. This room made me feel deeply happy, not least because of the realization that the thrilling experience of walking into sublime old architectural wonders could indeed be translated into Modern architecture, that it was possible to not only admire Modern architecture, but also to be moved by it.

As I walked through the rest of the museum, more wonders unfolded. There was not just one courtyard; on the second floor, on the other side of the building, there was a second courtyard. Not as tall, but even more sumptuous, this was where I first saw the art hung, not all at eye level as in most museums, but art on top of art. A ballroom-sized Oriental rug covered the floor, and it was not lost on me that Kahn was trying to show the art as it would have been seen in its earlier English country-house setting. On the third floor, a stroll around the galleries allowed me to look down into both courtyards, and to look out the large windows across to the beautiful stone arch of the earlier Swartwout art building across the road. The inset carpet with its flush stone borders in each of the domestic-scaled galleries were further references to English country living. But I found the ultimate homage to the old way of displaying art in the study gallery on the fourth floor, where the pictures were hung three or four high, frames practically touching each other, in a very satisfying anti-curatorial casual hodgepodge.

The only part of that building I never did like was that clanky stair in the concrete tube. Too much cleverness and not enough moodiness. A shame — because it is mood and feeling that Kahn the humanist restored to architecture.

Ann McCallum FAIA is a principal of Burr and McCallum Architects in Williamstown, Massachusetts.

John Hancock Tower

I.M. Pei and Partners, 1972-1976

In the beginning was the grid.

That silvery glass wall, of sublime proportion, reticulated in black metal lacework, speaks of mathematical order, of the heaven it captures and into which it dissolves. At its base, the façades align with the adjacent cornices of the neighbors about Copley Square. Above, the tower twists to address the South End, like an ice dancer reaching to embrace his partner. In the city where John Hancock the man, wealthiest in the New World, had decapitated Beacon Hill, John Hancock the company provided an antidote to the cataclysmic urban renewal of the 1960s. It, like its architects, was reserved but cordial, responsible, and as well behaved as urbanity could desire.

Then came the horror. The ground heaved and settled, damaging utilities and foundations. Vast sheets of glass were hurled by the structure over streets and persons. The tower that had seemed to be made of sky metamorphosed into a plywood sky ranch, then, painted black, into a brooding, menacing colossus. The building became a cocktail-party joke, an indictment of all architects and architecture. I collected glass shards from the streets in the back seat of my car. When I presented some to then-*New York Times* architecture critic Paul Goldberger, he prized the broken pieces as if sacred relics of the true cross that architects now bore.

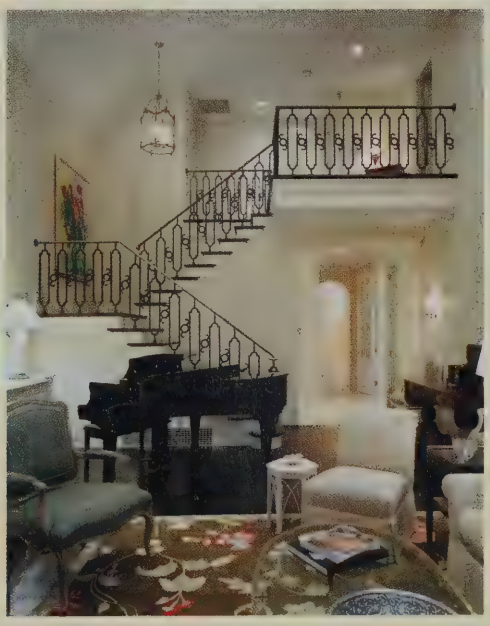
It did not stop there. The building swayed ominously. Studies revealed that the building threatened to dive down its long axis. A corset was inserted to still the unruly thing, and massive dampers were introduced to jig when the tower jogged.

Then came the lawyers, with little sound and much fury, and pointed fingers worthy of the Puritan founders. Much was learned, but in the end, documents were sealed for years so that others could reinvent the problems and suffer for themselves.

Finally, the building came to rest, improved for its travail. The super-thick replacement glass resists distortion, rendering an ever-more-perfect prism. Frank Gehry has called it the finest skyscraper in the world. Even those who hate tall buildings and the modern grow to love the building. With its companion, Trinity Church, it became an emblem of Boston old and new, in a stately, measured dance.

John Hancock does not live here anymore. Joining Fleet, Reebok, and Gillette, among others, our neighbor of nearly three centuries is leaving this a city of franchises. Still a dowdy, quirky old spinster when the building was built, Boston now clads itself in brand names, a mall in open air. The Hancock tower has become the headstone of the post-maritime, post-industrial, post-corporate Boston. Ever reflecting its setting, the building that fades into the brightening air, that hovers between matter and light, now overlooks a city that is passing into the immaterial. ■

Patrick Hickox is a principal of Hickox Williams Architects in Boston.



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(Still) Running on Empty

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose

By Andrew St. John AIA

On October 17, 1973, Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) announced that they would no longer ship petroleum to nations that had supported Israel in its conflict with Syria and Egypt — that is, to the United States and its allies in Western Europe. At around the same time, OPEC members agreed to use their leverage over the international price-setting mechanism for oil in order to raise world prices. Within three months, the price of oil quadrupled.

Americans seem to have a fondness for identifying dates that change the world as they know it. On that October day, they lost a future built on assumptions of cheap and plentiful fuel. The most immediate effect was on the cost of fuel — a gallon of gasoline rose from a national average of 38.5 cents in May 1973 to 55.1 cents in June 1974. As a result, the inflation rate jumped from 6.1 percent in 1973 to 11.1 percent in 1974. The medium-range effect was a recession from which the US economy was just beginning to emerge by 1976, when the inflation rate stood at 5.75 percent. In 1970, average homebuyers had to commit 17 percent of their income; by the end of the decade, that figure was 25 percent.

The architectural community's response to these events? It depends on where you look. Not surprisingly, the response from

Some architecture schools responded to the energy crisis with research projects, such as this house designed by students at the University of Minnesota, featuring wind-generated power, a waterless toilet, solar panels, and passive solar elements including a sod roof.

star professionals was, "What energy crisis?" Like any group that has achieved a high level of success under a given system, star architects of the time continued what they saw as the critical business of architecture and had little interest in questioning the paradigm that had brought them success. In a 1980 article in the *Harvard Architectural Review*, GSD faculty members Liane Lefaivre and Alexander Tzonis defined the mid-1970s as the "narcissist phase in architecture," identifying seven predominant design typologies (everything from "the heritage of Palladianism" to "exercises in Chomskyan linguistics") — with nary a mention of energy or the environment.

What has changed in 30 years? The power of the media to influence public perception and, to some extent, policy.

Students of architecture, not yet constrained by the need to make a living, had more to say on the changing times. The inaugural Spring 1976 issue of *Telesis*, an architectural student journal, made several references to energy-conscious design; subsequently renamed *Crit*, the magazine went on to publish stories reflecting continuing interest in social responsibility and conservation of resources.

The profession's rank-and-file, having left its student idealism behind, was nevertheless making tentative moves to embrace the new paradigm. A survey of typical buildings from the *AIA Journal* and the *Architectural Record* of the time reveals that buildings had begun to respond more overtly to site and environmental issues, primarily in suburban areas. A dozen entries for a competition in the *AIA Journal* on "energy as a design medium" responded quite creatively on a technological level to the "energy-conservation" aspects of the brief. The Boston Society of Architects sponsored Energy '78, a conference covering a wide range of technical issues. The images of the time, however, are of unrelentingly Modernist buildings; commodity and firmness had made strides, but delight was still firmly mired in the International Style.

It was in the corner of the construction industry garden occupied by the builders of custom single-family homes that the seeds planted on the first Earth Day in 1970 and nourished by the 1973 oil crisis had their healthiest sprouts. In the mid-to-late 1970s, the low-impact, resource-efficient principles of Ken Kearns' *Owner-Built Home* combined with the back-to-the-land movement to produce an explosion of experimentation with yurts, domes, earth-filled tires, and straw-bale construction. Often unconstrained by formal design training — but finding how-to advice in the proliferation of related magazines — small house-builders of the time had a boundless optimism and a faith that the nascent solar, wind, and geothermal technologies held the key to sustainable living. Malcolm Wells' underground houses provided early lessons in integrated design, and Scott and Helen Nearing provided a model of a lifestyle to fit. Their book *Living the Good Life: How to Live Sanely and Simply in a Troubled World*, published in 1954, gained significant currency over the '70s, although their model for subsistence living failed to stand up under later scrutiny (but that's another story).

What has changed in 30 years? Politically, sometimes it seems not much. We are approaching the end of an administration that believes, like its Nixon, Reagan, and paternal predecessors, in an infinity of natural resources, coal and oil energy sources in particular, and in the God-given right of the American people to have whatever share of those resources they choose. What has changed is the power of the media to influence public perception and, to some extent, policy. As Americans read *Time* magazine cover stories on global warming and take their children to an animated film subtitled *The Meltdown*, the next election may see the pendulum swing a little closer to the center, and we could see the restoration of funding for programs promoting resource efficiency inaugurated during earlier administrations. The American public has begun to hear about the distinction between simple energy efficiency and the more complex concepts of sustainable activity, and discussion about the ethical implications of the consumer society is becoming increasingly mainstream.

This more sophisticated understanding has also been manifested in the construction industry. The emergence of the US Green Building Council's LEED program as a tool for evaluating claims of green-ness (a concept unknown in 1976) is the good news. For practitioners who had been looking for a rating tool for many years, LEED is a godsend. The bad news is the public's correlation of LEED with all things green, and the program's bureaucracy and susceptibility to mechanistic manipulation.

The same groups exist in the design profession — they're just all 30 years older. What are the stars, the rank-and-file, and the students of architecture thinking about energy issues these days?

The stars, to no one's surprise, are still producing the contemporary equivalent of Venturi's 1976 Oberlin Art Museum addition. Signature corporate buildings still tend toward glass-sheathed boxes — Genzyme and Manulife in Boston, and 4 Times Square in Manhattan — even though the glass may be curved, may cover a higher level of HVAC and control technology, and is frequently hung on concrete and steel with a high recycled content. Institutional projects have continued to lead the way with new imagery — the Stata Center stands out as the quirkiest among them.

It's hard to tell whether *Architectural Record*'s 2006 "Record Houses" issue is tongue-in-cheek or determinedly retro. It's a celebration of The Box — concrete boxes, plywood-and-glass boxes, travertine boxes, teak boxes, rubber boxes, aluminum boxes — all exquisitely detailed and carefully rationalized as "reinterpreting vernacular," none of them any more contextual than Mies' Barcelona Pavilion. These may embody cutting-edge technology or more of the same pre-embargo paradigm — there is no way to tell from the photos.

The major change appears to be that achieving green-ness has joined a building's image as a status symbol. The Genzyme and Manulife projects have made high-profile runs at LEED certification, and even Boston mayor Thomas Menino has decreed that "major" new projects in the city will be at least "LEED certifiable." Already, the search for green has had a significant impact on the

construction industry nationally: *The Boston Globe* reports that "products and services for green buildings amounted to $5.8 billion in 2003."

Looking at the work of the rank-and-file, this newfound concern with sustainability (or at least with the kudos for being green) is producing architecture of increased technical quality. Architecture schools are graduating professionals with a much higher level of environmental awareness and responsibility. As energy costs consume dramatically larger percentages of building operating budgets, clients are demanding greater energy efficiency, which in turn drives both technology and the profession's awareness of resource-efficient techniques. In general, buildings use less virgin material to build, and less energy to perform the same heating and cooling tasks. From complaining that "I can't get anyone to buy energy-efficient design," architects have progressed to "When is someone going to provide some competition to LEED?"

Have issues of sustainability had a concomitant effect on aesthetics? Ironically, the profession's insistence on the primacy of the publicly unpopular Modern Movement, combined with a spate of truly ugly buildings, largely erased its credibility as the arbiter of taste. Since the lockstep of Modernism has been broken, however, we have seen a flowering of building imagery reflecting two fundamentally different attitudes about architectural expression and imagery.

The first views image, function, and technology as mutually independent. Office buildings can look like cathedrals, hotels can look like castles, and museums can look like crumpled tinfoil; any of them can be adapted to sites anywhere in the world. Once a building starts to respond to its environment, however, certain constants come into play. High ceilings and large windows promote natural cooling in hot weather. Heating and cooling efficiency leads to greater wall thickness and smaller windows. Freed from socially directed imagery and using some of the tenets of indigenous or vernacular design, the best contemporary design reflects location, function, and technology with creative vigor.

In the last three decades, the profession of architecture has made enormous strides in the improvement of resource efficiency. As members of a culture, however, architects are carried on a river of ever-increasing consumption. New buildings are more efficient but ever larger and more voluminous. More and more of them are air-conditioned, and the (sometimes) fuel-efficient cars used to get to them must travel farther each year.

Environmentalists use the concept of the "resource footprint" of a society, which refers to the area of land required to sustain a given population. Boston's resource footprint extends almost to the Mississippi River. It would take five Earths to sustain the population of the planet at the level of the American economy. The task is to remember that this is the only one we have. ■

Andrew St. John AIA recently co-founded the firm of Smith+St.John in Essex, Massachusetts, which provides owner's representation and development management services (www.smith-stjohn.com).

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A Marketplace of Ideas

Jane Thompson AICP, Assoc. AIA, talks with Mildred Schmertz FAIA

Jane Thompson AICP, Assoc. AIA, is president of Thompson Design Group in Boston. With her late husband and partner, Benjamin Thompson FAIA, she was a principal of BTA, the architect and planner of the Faneuil Hall Marketplace ("Quincy Market"), which opened in 1976. A graduate of Vassar, she was previously an assistant curator in the Museum of Modern Art's architecture department, architecture editor of *Interiors* magazine, and founding co-editor of *Industrial Design Magazine*. She has been a director of IDCA (International Design Conference in Aspen) since the 1970s.

Mildred Schmertz FAIA is a contributing writer for *Architectural Digest*. An editor/contributor for six books on architecture and planning, she also writes occasionally for several national publications. She was a writer and editor for *Architectural Record* for 33 years, serving as editor-in-chief from 1985 to 1990. A former member of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, she received a B.Arch. from Carnegie Mellon and MFA from Yale.

Mildred Schmertz: Faneuil Hall Marketplace — the design of which was led by you and your late husband and partner, Ben Thompson — opened 30 years ago, during the Bicentennial. Its unusual success was the result of a mixture of individual passions, eccentricity, devotion, and good luck — and a collection of people who were doing the right thing at a very opportune time.

Jane Thompson: The story of the market actually began 10 years before it opened. The market didn't happen because we sat down and designed it. We had to discover it — to figure out what to do with empty buildings, how to implement the plan, how to meet the requirements of treating a famous but neglected historic place in a way that would keep it alive in the new century. We always said our work was entrepreneurial, meaning we made it up, took big risks, and fought for it. Nobody asked us to do it or told us what to do. It was a total puzzle from the beginning.

Mildred Schmertz: What was the condition of the market buildings when you first became involved?

Jane Thompson: The marketplace, which was a wholesale district, had been virtually closed down because it was out of keeping with the new City Hall district. It sat on six acres of very valuable land, which developers cherished for another high-rise. Ben got interested in the site early on — this was when Ed Logue was head of the Boston Redevelopment Authority and Ben was chairman of the architecture department at the Harvard Graduate School of Design — and did a study with some colleagues and students, which they assembled as an illustrated report that he gave to Logue. Logue was interested enough to commission a feasibility study, which came back saying the proposal would "never fly." Meanwhile, the preservationists, led

The Faneuil Hall Marketplace ("Quincy Market") opened on August 26, 1976 — the 150th anniversary of the original market building.

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by [the architect] Tad Stahl, were aware of the value of the buildings and managed to get HUD funding for exterior restoration while the BRA was working on an RFP [request for proposals] to attract developers. The big question, of course, was what to do with the buildings — 400,000 square feet of space. There was talk of offering it to the telephone company for back offices.

Mildred Schmertz: I imagine there was talk about a museum, too.

Jane Thompson: Yes, but as Ben kept saying, how many museums can an historic city support? A few market vendors were still hanging on. We had the idea of turning Quincy back into a public market, using the side buildings for shops, cafés, and offices, with apartments above if permitted. And that was the basis for our response to the RFP. This was in 1969. We built a model showing every little pushcart and every little vendor and food stall. We teamed up with a developer from Philadelphia who had done a small market in Society Hill and with George Macomber, the contractor. And we were selected. Unfortunately, the city fired our developer three months later, claiming he wasn't able to make it happen. His focus was preservation, and he didn't have the experience to handle City Hall. Neither did we. So he went back to Philadelphia, probably gratefully. We then went to the director of the BRA, Bob Kenney at that time, and offered to find another developer. That was the beginning of the whole saga: initiating the project; making plans for a mix of uses in all the spaces; making a pro-forma; finding a second developer; and working out the financing of the entire development. It took about six years after the RFP — 10 years until a nickel of fee was paid to us.

Mildred Schmertz: How did you go about finding a developer?

Jane Thompson: We were pretty naïve in those days. Most architects did not really know much about developers. We called the few in Boston; they liked the project, but they didn't know how to "do" it. A marketplace was an unknown product type. I approached my friend Bob Simon, who was then developing the new town of Reston, Virginia. Bob wasn't free to do it, but put us in touch with Jim Rouse. Actually, Bob sent him our presentation book with a note: "Pay attention." And Jim did.

Mildred Schmertz: What made Rouse different from the others? What did he see that they didn't?

Jane Thompson: Rouse was one of those rare, quick-study people. He'd done numerous malls and had started a few stores, so he had an understanding of small, individualized retailing. Jim came to Boston and we gave him a tour of the market area. The place of course was dead, a complete mess. Ben said to him, "Jim, you've done 53 malls and used up a lot of corn fields in this country. Now you owe it to the American city to get down here and do just as good a job of making this place come alive." Jim was a very religious man, and he took this really seriously, as a sort of mission. The city didn't see it that way, of course; the administration didn't welcome someone from Baltimore coming here to take over *our* Quincy Market. But in the end, the city's business leaders, especially Norman Leventhal and key bankers, saw the wisdom of bringing real money into the city; they put the pressure on. It was an absolute, straight-out political contest over preservation and redevelopment issues for three years.

> During the last two years of the project, nobody else believed it was really going to happen. It was a total act of faith.
>
> — Jane Thompson

Mildred Schmertz: The community was behind you, too.

Jane Thompson: Yes. Actually, the most effective and helpful group was the Boston Society of Architects. And that had a design impact, too. Some people had a purist approach to restoring the buildings as they were in 1826. But another group favored both saving this original market *and* modernizing it, which is to say adding or changing elements to update its function for the community and consumers. Window glass was a focus of that debate.

Mildred Schmertz: You didn't want to put the small panes back.

Jane Thompson: Ben said, "How is anyone going to see goods in the windows if I have 24-pane frames? This isn't old London. This isn't Ye Olde Boston." There were many small battles like that. Rouse took on the economic viability questions. But he knew his field and had done his own feasibility study. He brought in three young, ace leasing people, and they combed the countryside to find merchants who would bring their goods to the food arcade, the stalls, and the pushcarts. Our concept was that all vendors would be small, local operators — not the chain stores that occupied the downtowns and shopping malls then and have taken over the marketplace now. I'll tell you, during the last two years before the opening, nobody else believed it was really going to — or could — happen. It was a total act of faith by a tiny band of believers.

Mildred Schmertz: What was it that you and Ben knew how to do, that nobody else did?

Jane Thompson: We had experience that was not characteristic of the architecture trade — in both design and retailing. While practicing at TAC [The Architects Collaborative] in 1953, Ben had started a shop for interior furnishings called Design Research. TAC was building many modern homes in the Boston area, and his clients had no place to buy appropriate furnishings. So he began to import furniture and then Marimekko fabrics from Finland and Denmark. He shipped

The "festival marketplace" concept revitalized urban districts around the world. Top to bottom: South Street Seaport (New York City); Harborplace (Baltimore). (Architect: Benjamin Thompson Associates.)

it all to a house on Brattle Street — just one room where his clients could see it and make selections. That was the beginning of a showroom, which expanded to three walk-ups in a few years.

Ben traveled a lot; and when you travel in Europe, of course, you eat very well. He discovered not only food but also the *experience* of food — the festival of people selling their own produce off boats and from carts in downtown Zurich, on the harbor in Helsinki and Copenhagen. Having seen these markets still thriving in the so-called modern world, we had a natural confidence that something akin to a permanent farmer's market could work here and would also help to bring people downtown. There was a growing rebellion against packaged, processed food — the whole quest for fresh food was emerging, but there were very few sources.

Mildred Schmertz: Was Julia Child on the scene then?

Jane Thompson: Yes, indeed. Paul Child, Julia's husband, had been Ben's instructor in prep school, and when they moved to Cambridge, we all became lasting friends, devoted to food in many guises.

Mildred Schmertz: I can't imagine having the Childs over for dinner.

Jane Thompson: I cooked a number of dinners for Julia and Paul. Once I cooked a lamb that was supposed to be a really rare gigot. Well, the lamb was vastly more rare than I dared to serve. But Ben had cooked a back-up dinner. "Let's sit down," he said, "I've got an oyster stew all ready."

Mildred Schmertz: That was a time when everyone shopped in supermarkets and suburban malls. Your concept for the marketplace was completely alien.

Jane Thompson: It was a memory of traditions not really forgotten. But in terms of assembling a market hall of high-quality suppliers, we were flying without maps. Rouse insisted the opening had to be August 26, 1976, the actual 150th birthday of the market. That gave us nine months to design and draw up documents and get it built. The night before the opening, nobody knew who was actually going to show up with wares to sell in the morning.

Quincy Market was the first phase. In order to make up for the fact we had only one building with considerable empty space, we populated the arcades with 35 hastily-made pushcarts. And all of us on the team — BTA staff, Rouse staff, and construction staff — took a pushcart and provided something to sell. We sold herbs. Someone else sold cobblestones. Jim Rouse sold baskets.

Mildred Schmertz: On that first day, 50,000 people showed up. It turned into a three-day party with 150,000 people in all. What were the longer-term effects on the city?

Jane Thompson: The immediate impact was to loosen up the economics of downtown development, especially conversions of historic structures. It was a demonstration of the synergy among people living, shopping, and visiting the city. There was after-hours activity downtown again. Most significantly, it proved you could draw people back from the suburbs into the city. I also believe the marketplace had everything to do with the rescue of Boston Harbor — it brought attention to a place when nobody went there. The marketplace wasn't on the harbor, but it drew people to it by providing and reinforcing the connection to projects that were already emerging on the waterfront, starting

Above: Recent work by Thompson Design Group includes the Buffalo Bayou Master Plan in Houston.

in the late 1960s — the Aquarium, the conversion of Lewis Wharf, the Pilot House, and Commercial Wharf. But they were isolated from the rest of the city. It was a form of geographic pioneering that brought attention to the next opportunities.

Mildred Schmertz: And of course, it contributed to the revitalization of other cities, too, that followed its model: Baltimore; Miami; Yokohama; Sydney. It's hard now to think of any significant city that hasn't been influenced by the "festival marketplace" concept. But the marketplace is also an interesting example of how planning really happens: the implementation depends upon individuals. Here you had Ben, going around the decaying old market, photographing its beauty, a designer who also happens to be a merchant. Then you had Jim Rouse, who was deeply spiritual in the sense that he wanted to do some larger good. Most people think of planners as well-educated people sitting in offices with their statisticians and their policies. But here you had people with particular talents and interests who happened to be in the right place at the right time.

Jane Thompson: We *made* it the right time. Sometimes planners see drawings as abstractions and forget how or why people will actually use these spaces — why they're coming and going, what their needs are, what attracts them. Ben had that instinct and a talent for observing life. With friends, he never needed to ask if you wanted a drink and what would you like — he would simply hand you your Bloody Mary, because of course you were thirsty.

Mildred Schmertz: Jane, people know a lot about Ben but haven't necessarily heard as much about you.

Jane Thompson: My background was in the arts, starting with dance and drama. I went to Vassar, where my thesis was a dance drama that I wrote, composed, and performed in. In the course of that project, I did some research at the Museum of Modern Art; I knew immediately that I wanted to work there. Before graduating, I took a secretarial course so that I could get a job at the museum — women didn't get real jobs without being a secretary. I was hired for the MoMA secretarial pool and soon became the secretary and assistant to Philip Johnson, the newly returned head of the architecture department. I spent several years there at absolutely the greatest time in its history; everybody in the design world came there, and the shows were ground-breaking. It was an education in the history of architecture and its future, and it also helped me develop my critical sense. After that I went into design publishing.

Mildred Schmertz: You founded *Industrial Design* magazine?

Jane Thompson: First I was the architecture editor of *Interiors* — a position I took over from Arthur Drexler when Philip Johnson brought him to MoMA. In 1953, Whitney, the publisher, asked if I would head up a new magazine, *Industrial Design*, which I agreed to do with Deborah Allen as co-editor. We struck out without a prototype to create a publication for industrial designers that would connect them to consumers and users — the applied life of the product. That was the beginning of the magazine that continues today as *I.D.* I left the magazine to move to Bennington, Vermont, and raise a family. I did some writing — a series of books for Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. — and when I became interested in education, I wrote the program for a new regional high school for the Bennington area. TAC was eventually hired to design the school — Ben was the architect-in-charge, and I headed the building committee for the school board. I had met Ben earlier — we had published two articles about Design Research in *Industrial Design*. But I had no real insight about him until the Mount Anthony School project. It took four or five years to get the school done, at which point, he asked me to come to Boston and help with restructuring Design Research.

In the mid-'60s, Ben underwent three major shifts in his life: he was "fired" from Design Research by his investor, who managed a hostile takeover; he left TAC to start Benjamin Thompson Associates across the street in Cambridge; and he left his wife. I stepped into BTA in 1965, when the firm was beginning the studies of the marketplace project.

Mildred Schmertz: It couldn't have been easy — what was your role?

Jane Thompson: There is always a lot of verbiage in the realization of an architectural project. I've often said I'm a conceptual designer — I don't have to draw it, but I do have to write about it. When it came to the marketplace, I wrote everything about it. I wrote the program for every restaurant — including the food specialities — and every shop and every food stall that we imagined might be there. I wrote the history of the place, and later ran numbers on possible rent levels. I had to articulate the vision for the project in words and numbers to accompany the models and images, so the developers and financial people, and especially the City, could buy into it.

Mildred Schmertz: It's usually people with MBAs who do that sort of work. You must have been a natural.

Jane Thompson: I didn't know enough *not* to do it. I asked a lot of questions and observed how businessmen did it, and then I just did it myself. It was a natural pairing of talents. Ben had great expressive abilities in the visual medium, and I would translate that into verbal and financial language. While we were waiting, quite a few years, for the marketplace approvals, we decided to do a little restaurant — Harvest, which was next to our office and D/R. When I went to the bank to borrow some money, they agreed, with the condition that I provide a feasibility study. A what? I went out and did one — I counted all the people who lived within a half mile, their incomes, their ages, the number of meals out per week, where they had to go to get good food. I had no prototype or rulebook; I just did what seemed logical. And all of a sudden we were in the restaurant business.

Mildred Schmertz: It always seemed to me that you and Ben were always redefining the art and practice of architecture in a more comprehensive way — you were paying attention to new possibilities.

Jane Thompson: I think that grew out of the nature of our relationship. It was totally like dancing — an unconscious synchronizing. Our value systems were absolutely parallel. Our personalities were absolutely opposite. But with the same objectives in our minds, we always got to the same place. So it was a very successful partnership. We both felt the need as designers to understand the more earthy experiences of life and the dynamics of the society around us. It doesn't hurt for an architect to know about waiting tables or operating a cash register.

I think that male-female partnerships are great — though I really wouldn't enjoy a professional marriage without some shared focus. I think it is a loss when women architects feel they must imitate their male colleagues in order to compete. Women think and feel differently and can make significant original intellectual contributions — and the world needs that in every area of design.

Mildred Schmertz: After Ben retired in 1993, you left BTA to establish Thompson Design Group. What kind of work is your office doing now?

Jane Thompson: We've been doing large-scale redevelopment planning in a number of communities, such as Cleveland, Houston, and Long Branch, New Jersey, with several large new communities in Maryland and Virginia. The work represents an interesting evolution of the marketplace concept. The first festival-marketplace developments, of course, were not publicly funded projects; we tried to place them in the public realm through the grace of our design, but they were privately planned retail-based developments. That's changed — many cities have come to understand that they can't sell their souls to developers or delegate planning decisions to them. Cities themselves can initiate and even manage projects, or find a developer who will follow the rules that the city establishes. Those kinds of projects, working with smart public entities, have been our focus.

Mildred Schmertz: In my 33 years with *Architectural Record*, we rarely believed that the planning projects we published would ever actually be implemented, but we published them anyway in the hope that it might help. It was always heartening to me when something that we had published actually became real.

Jane Thompson: I believe all those plans on the shelf are necessary to the thought process. The iterations are absolutely essential to public understanding. A few people have to get the idea of change in their heads, then more people get it in their heads. Gradually everyone begins to see things in a different way. I don't ever regret the number of prior iterations of the projects we've done, because they built an audience for and an acceptance of what we were trying to achieve and finally accomplished.

Mildred Schmertz: That kind of process also allows people to better understand the spirit of change and the spirit of the place that is described in a planning document.

Jane Thompson: Indeed. When Ben was awarded the AIA Gold Medal, he gave a speech — about joy. Imagine that at the AIA! Joy was the spirit we tried to impart to these places. You should feel it when you walk through a space. This is purely sensory; you don't have to theorize about it. Ben wanted the whole world to have fun; he wanted everyone to take pleasure in their environment and in other people. I think it is a singular achievement that he could survive in this field, talking about joy and delight. I'm glad he did. We have to keep reminding ourselves that's really what we're after — in a world of ugliness and cruelty, it means designing spaces and places that will give joy to the lives of others. ■

> Sometimes planners see drawings as abstractions and forget how or why people will actually use these spaces.
>
> — Jane Thompson

Covering the Issues

Ch-ch-changes... ***Art New England*** focuses its April/May issue on architecture. Perhaps the most interesting (and useful) piece is Barbara O'Brien's succinct synopsis of regional museum construction now underway. Boston's ICA, the MFA, the Isabella Stewart Gardner, the Provincetown Art Association, and the Museum of Art at RISD are all in the midst of major projects. For a guide to what's what and who's doing it, check here.

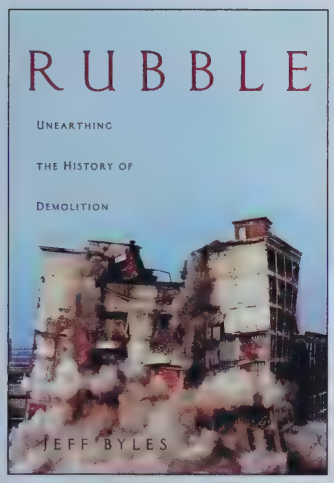
Looking around... Dedicated to "creative photography," the bimonthly ***LensWork*** publishes "portfolios" of photographs, emphasizing the ideas, imagination, and concepts behind the art. For "Urban Wilderness: Quiet Beauty in the City" (March/April 2006), William W. Fuller examines cities as canvases of abstract composition. Neither documentary nor architectural photography, Fuller's elegant black-and-white photographs focus on groups of buildings as collections of lines and planes. His camera reveals the mix of patterns and textures only possible in the city, and provides us with a fresh way of viewing our everyday world.

Bubblicious... If you've been kicking yourself for not buying during this recent real estate boom, you can take solace here. Michael Hudson's title says it all: "The New Road to Serfdom: An Illustrated Guide to the Coming Real Estate Collapse" (***Harper's***, May 2006). With Nigel Holmes' clever graphics, Hudson paints a simultaneously entertaining and terrifying portrait about how the real estate bubble will burst. *Soon*. Equal parts doomsday novel, comic strip, and Economics 101, Hudson and Holmes explain the interrelated world of interest rates, tax breaks, and compound interest. For those who design residences, care about the homebuilding industry, or just want to feel less guilt over renting, study up.

Thoreau has left the cabin... In "Mango Body Whips, A Dead Chihuahua, and the Social Geography of Air: Thirteen Ways of Seeing Nature in LA" (***Believer***, April 2006), renegade nature writer Jenny Price takes on the wilderness-centric nature writing establishment, arguing that it's time to look beyond Walden. In doing so, she illustrates how nature affects and is affected by us everyday, even in urban-sprawl poster-child cities like Los Angeles. Don't be fooled — underlying Price's witty narrative are thoughtful, thought-provoking questions: Who uses nature? How do we use it? How does nature react? How do we react? She examines ways in which we transform nature into the stuff with which we literally build our lives, from building materials and the aforementioned mango lotion to current urban redevelopment plans for the concrete-lined LA River.

Are we at the tipping point?... Whether inspired by Earth Day, the Katrina aftermath, $3-per-gallon gas, or *Seinfeld*'s enduring popularity (keep reading), sustainability continues to spread exponentially over the newsstands. ***Seed*** serves up a special issue on the "State of the Planet" (April/May 2006), explaining what global warming is and how we might reduce it now. ***Vanity Fair***'s "Special Green Issue" (May 2006) puts an eco twist on its normal fare (green-hued Annie Leibovitz photos of leading environmental activists), while introducing features such as Al Gore's essay on a green future, and a photo-simulation of what Washington, DC, New York City, San Francisco, and Martha's Vineyard will look like when Greenland melts. Gore's mug also graces the May cover of ***Wired***. Pro growth and pro tech, the *Wired* editors argue that "entrepreneurial zeal and market forces guided by sustainable policies can propel the world into a bright green future." ***Elle*** even jumps into the action with its first ever "Green Issue" (May 2006), printed on recycled paper and guest-edited by Laurie David. David has been combining her considerable ambition and talent with her celebrity as the wife of *Seinfeld*'s creator to launch sustainability into the mainstream media. These mags are all quite similar, really. Each presents trends, people to watch, and stuff we should do. Together, they provide a comprehensive crash course in why green design matters. ■

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA, is a designer at Rogers Marvel Architects in New York City.



RUBBLE: UNEARTHING THE HISTORY OF DEMOLITION
by Jeff Byles
Harmony Books, 2005

As a history of something easily taken for granted, *Rubble* falls into a recent literary genre that includes histories of salt, longitude, cod, zero, the screwdriver, and the potato. Thankfully, unlike other authors in this genre, Jeff Byles doesn't try to convince us that his topic changed the entire course of civilization.

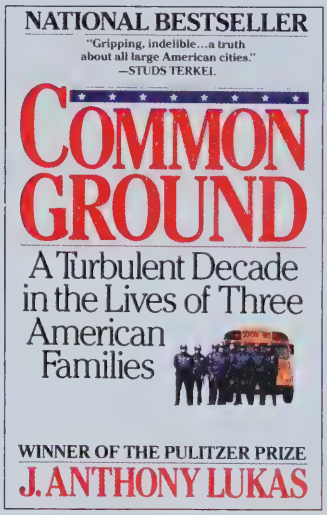
Rubble's romp through the history of building demolition begins with the Great Fire of London in 1666 (where buildings were demolished to form a firebreak), and includes Haussmann's Paris, much of the history of New York, urban renewal, the end of the Rat-Pack-era Vegas strip, Pruitt-Igoe, the current piecemeal demolition of Detroit, and numerous other events. It covers the physical techniques, political, cultural, and economic forces, and sublime aspects of demolition.

Interviews with the Loizeaux family, master implosion experts, are particularly compelling. They speak of explosive demolition in an almost Zen-like way, studying a structure in great detail, then using gravity and the minimum amount of explosives possible, perfectly placed and sequenced, to bring the structure harmoniously down upon itself. To the Loizeauxs, a structure perfectly taken down almost appears to "melt," and creates an elusive sound they refer to as a "symphony of failure." One 1962 photo captures the implosion of a brick building at the moment it appears to melt like wax—all its window openings visible, but none square. Aside from the dust jacket, the photos are black-and-white, mostly small and grainy. And although it has a very strong opening, the book lacks a strong closing. *Rubble* begins with a bang, but ends with a cloud of dust. These criticisms are minor; *Rubble* is an engaging and worthwhile read, particularly for those interested in construction, urban planning, historic preservation, or green building issues.

Byles's writing is consistently clear and lively, and frequently witty and iconoclastic. He tells us that the demolition trade was "conceived as the bastard child of the construction and scrap trades" and proclaims Alfred Nobel (who patented dynamite) the "patron saint of creative destruction." Other memorable turns-of-phrase include "the classic dynamite stick—à la Wile E. Coyote," and "wig-flipping implosion."

Rubble refrains from value judgments, leaving this to the reader. The book is the better for it. For instance, Byles describes how, prior to 1925, buildings were dismantled from the top-down, with efficient salvaging, reuse, or recycling of building materials. Demolition contractors actually *paid owners* for the right to demolish their buildings, making their profit from the sale of the salvaged materials. All that changed rapidly by 1928, when incentive/disincentive deadline contracts led demolition contractors to charge owners to rapidly destroy their buildings with heavy machinery, and dump the remains in the ocean or in landfills. Those interested in environmental responsibility, public policy, and construction contracts can surely draw their own conclusions.

Matthew Bronski, Assoc. AIA, is an engineer/designer at Simpson Gumpertz & Heger in Waltham, Massachusetts. He co-chairs the BSA Historic Resources Committee.



COMMON GROUND: A TURBULENT DECADE IN THE LIVES OF THREE AMERICAN FAMILIES
by J. Anthony Lukas
Vintage (paperback), 1986

History is made by kings, cardinals, and congresses, and lived by rich and poor alike. Rarely is this outlook expressed as eloquently as in J. Anthony Lukas' Pulitzer-Prize-winning study of three Boston families, *Common Ground*, first published in 1985.

In 1974, court-ordered busing unleashed an outpouring of racial animosity and class resentment in Boston that had been building almost as long as the city itself. *Common Ground* chronicles the discord and upheaval that busing precipitated in the lives of the black Twymons, the Irish McGoffs, and the Yankee Divers with a broad, if brooding, genius. Lukas narrates the troubling events that unfolded in Boston during that decade with passionate specificity, conveying the impact of those events on the hopes and dreams of particular people and particular places: Colin Diver, the aspiring young graduate of Harvard Law, raising his family in the gentrifying South End; Rachel Twymon, mother of four, whose only resources were her church and her faith, living only blocks away but worlds apart from the Divers; and Alice McGoff, a beleaguered widow struggling to raise six children in the Bunker Hill housing project in Charlestown.

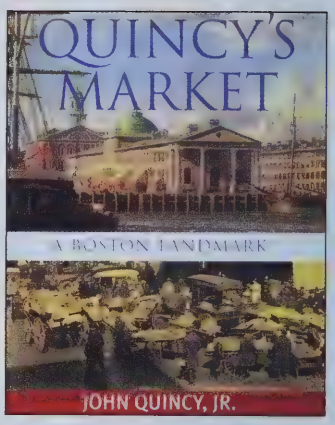
Interspersed with the gritty experiences of these families are elaborate interludes, detailing the roles of school committee chairwoman Louise Day Hicks, federal judge Arthur Garrity, Cardinal Humberto Medeiros, *Globe* editor Thomas Winship, and Mayor Kevin White. These forays into the lives of the seemingly powerful offer a sharp contrast to the circumscribed worlds of the McGoffs and the Twymons, leaving the affluent Divers to inhabit a middle territory.

Lukas employs this diverse cast to portray the controversy surrounding busing in terms of the conflicting demands of equality and community. The racial homogeneity of Boston's neighborhoods created *de facto* segregation. Busing was necessary to end the inequalities in education that resulted from that segregation, but usurped the rights of Boston's neighborhoods by denying residents the opportunity to chose what schools their children would attend. When Lukas confronts the role of fear and bigotry in the events he describes, he does so with a surprisingly even hand, finding the roots of prejudice in previous centuries and tracing them through generations to their flowering in the 1970s.

Were Lukas an historian, he would have been obligated to provide references and explanatory notes. As a journalist, his veracity is a product of his reputation. One wishes that Lukas offered a description of how he gathered and verified the vast quantities of material that must have been necessary to produce this work.

Despite that flaw and the descent in its closing pages from a tone of assured impartiality to one of resignation, *Common Ground* comprises a remarkable education on politics, institutional behavior, and human nature — at once a classic work of nonfiction and an enduring statement of the notion that economic parity is prerequisite to social, and even global, harmony.

Jay Weber practices architecture with The Narrow Gate, LLP, in Boston and teaches at Wentworth Institute of Technology.



QUINCY'S MARKET: A BOSTON LANDMARK
by John Quincy, Jr.
Northeastern University Press, 2003

Quincy Market persists as the unofficial name of Faneuil Hall Marketplace for a lot of good reasons, as we learn in John Quincy, Jr.'s tribute to his forebear Josiah Quincy's labor of love. The first urban

renewal project in the nation (1826), which became, exactly 150 years later, the first festival marketplace in the world, richly deserves this profusely illustrated monograph.

Quincy reminds us that then as now, no visionary idea goes undismissed. Bostonians have always been a tough crowd. Violence and rioting notwithstanding, local merchant Peter Faneuil funded the market-cum-meeting-hall that was to bear his name, just in time to provide an incubator for independence and for James Otis to dub it the "Cradle of Liberty." A generation later, Bulfinch enlarged on the original form of this almost sacred building in what may be the nation's first façade preservation project.

Mayor Josiah Quincy faced universal opposition to his Big Idea for a central food market on the dilapidated waterfront behind Faneuil Hall. For his tenacity, after what he insisted be called Faneuil Market literally delivered the goods in 1826, people applauded when he passed, and the popular name Quincy Market immediately stuck to what is arguably the finest civic design of its era, as well as the first indoor mall in America. The text is laced with such nuggets as this: the vista of repetitive granite forms receding 500 feet into the distance prefigures not only early railroad depot design, but also what was to happen vertically in skyscrapers to come.

Quincy Market I's cycle of growth, stagnation, and decline lasted into the 1960s, as fires and changing technology diluted the original simplicity of form and firms moved out. It took a youthful mayor, Kevin White, looking out his window in Boston's new City Hall over the dereliction that Quincy Market had become, to make it *his* Big Idea, and that of the Boston Redevelopment Authority. As Quincy had relied on architects Asher Benjamin and Alexander Parris, White deferred to design gurus/entrepreneurs Ben and Jane Thompson in tandem with mall developer James Rouse. If anything, success seemed even dicier in 1973 than in 1823. In defiance of all conventional retailing wisdom of the day, they bet on an anchorless mall dominated by small local retailers in a downtown locale. We easily forget now that 30 years ago, the world of sidewalk cafés, shady pedestrian malls, and commercially viable historic preservation projects we take for granted had barely made its way here from Europe, when the Thompson/Rouse team combined it all with creative and colorful retailing. If Quincy Market I came in under budget, did not require eminent domain, and cost the public nothing for infrastructure, Quincy Market II required 35 percent more equity than projected, but went on to make 300 percent of the profit projected. The rest, as they say, is history.

Thomas M. Paine ASLA is senior landscape architect at Brown Richardson & Rowe in Boston.

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Site Work | WEBSITES OF NOTE

EILEEN GRAY
www.tangle.com/Eileen/Welcome.html
www.e1027.com
If your decorating tastes turn toward the MoMo look, chances are you own one of the icons of the Modern Movement: the Eileen Gray Table. The Irish-born architect, who died in 1976 at the age of 98, earned respect in her lifetime, but real fame came later. These two sites represent efforts to promote her legacy, one through a documentary film, the other through restoration of her "E1027 House" in France.

ALVAR AALTO FOUNDATION
www.alvaraalto.fi
As in Aalto's work, there is often more here than meets the eye. Click on the blue drawings and spend some time exploring the work and life of Alvar Aalto, who died in 1976. (Be sure to click on the Union Jack icon unless your Finnish is fluent.)

THE LAKESHORE DRIVE APARTMENTS
http://members.aol.com/richpat/860/860d2npm.htm
No, the Mies van der Rohe landmark buildings weren't built in 1976. But in 1976, the AIA chose to honor them with its 25-Year Award.

BOSTON SCHOOLS DESEGREGATION-ERA RECORDS PROJECT
www.cityofboston.gov/archivesandrecords/desegregation
The City of Boston maintains an archive to record the events of the busing crisis, noting, "Few events in Boston's history have been as divisive, or have left such a bitter cultural legacy, as the desegregation crisis." Some material and abstracts are online. Look for the audio files listed under "Public Events," including a presentation by Herbert Gleason (*see page 18*).

HYPERHISTORY ONLINE
www.hyperhistory.com/online_n2/History_n2/a.html
HyperHistory presents 3,000 years of world history in colorful timelines. This is history for right-brained visual folk — or for anyone who never realized that the Aztec Empire, the Byzantine Empire, and the Ming Dynasty were all contemporaneous.

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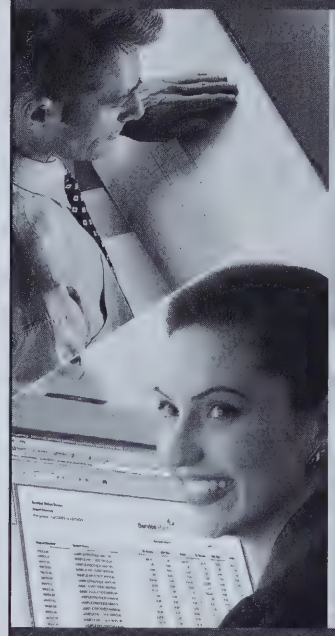

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Shawmut Avenue

When I moved to Boston in 1976, I rented an affordable apartment 10 blocks beyond Copley Square, in a brick South End townhouse with a diagonal view of Union Park and a more direct look at the failed housing the neighborhood referred to as a "HUD dud." The buildings on that block were mostly still rooming houses, but mine had new owners who were persuaded (and persuaded me) that the neighborhood was on the verge of a turnaround because the elevated Orange Line would soon come down and make life a lot quieter and safer. In the meantime, they told me to be careful getting in or out of my car — I should notice the people on the sidewalk before unlocking the door — and, with the necessary exception of the exterminator, not to let any strangers into the building. When my father visited from New York to see my new set-up, the cab driver told him, "Oh, you don't want to go there, sir," so I spared him the grim detail that, on my afternoon walkabout the day before, in a gritty snow bank, I'd come upon a used Kotex and a decapitated pigeon.

But when spring arrived, the sunny brownstone stoops became occupied by elderly roomers who appeared to have been keeping an eye on everything for decades, and whose company I found both interesting and reassuring. Of course they would clearly be the first casualties of the promised South End makeover, but they seemed to sense correctly that this was unlikely to occur during their lifetimes.

I remember paying $180 a month, and numerologists would enjoy the fact that in today's market my rent would run about $1,800, according to the Gibson real estate office I consulted both then and now. It turns out, however, that my building currently consists of three condos, and I've learned that my former two-room unit sold for $245,000 in 2000 and again in 2004 for $382,500. Sure enough, when I poke around back, where the once derelict alley now goes by the upwardly-mobile name of Newland Street, I can peek through the boards of the sliding garage doors behind my old building to spy a silver Mercedes "4-matic" on a gravel car-park. If I lived in Unit Two today, I'd have a pressurized deck to overlook it.

But I find a truer symbol of prosperity in my rediscovery of the linked garden plots that were established around 30 years ago as the Rutland and Washington Streets Community Garden, cultivated land that still stretches the long block beyond Shawmut to where the elevated tracks once cast their defining shadow. The "Boston Urban Gardens" movement was a force for good back in the mid-'70s, as well as a logical extension of the "Tent City" coalition in the '60s, which promoted an alternative model to the brand of renewal that merely uproots its residents. I, too, want to resist resorting to an Either/Or argument about gentrification, so I am in search of an encompassing metaphor for urban regeneration. And this is my reason for returning to those plots that are at once venerable and lovingly tended.

In the language of gardening, it is essential, so as not to exhaust the soil, to replenish the nutrients by some method of crop rotation. And in a similar way, aren't we all reliant upon the inexhaustible energy of the renovators — along with their dollars — to periodically upgrade the otherwise steadily deteriorating infrastructure of inner-city housing? But just as nature thrives on balance, so too must the neighborhood, to ensure that in another 30 years (or 60, or 90) the cycle might repeat itself.

Across town, as it happens, I've spent these past three decades imposing my own fluctuating will and wallet upon a similar brick townhouse, at times updating its systems and otherwise simply keeping it looking alive with a fresh coat of paint. It's an impulse I learned on Shawmut Avenue, half my life ago. ■

Alexandra Marshall is a writer in Boston (www.alexandramarshall.com). Her most recent novel is *The Court of Common Pleas*.

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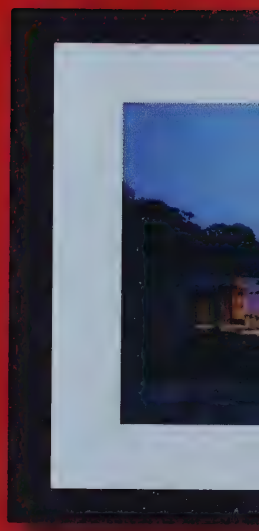

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ArchitectureBoston

Change Comes to the Neighborhood

Mitigating Circumstances

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So Near and So Far

Most Bostonians don't really know East Boston, despite the fact that many of them drive through or fly over it on a regular basis. And most of them have no idea of the magnitude of the change that is underway in this neighborhood. In the last two decades, the largely Italian population has become increasingly Latino. Now new construction is underway, including waterfront condos that will lure a population of affluent professionals to the working-class community.

There are many reasons why Bostonians — or for that matter, anyone who cares about any city — should pay attention to the neighborhood on the other side of the harbor. East Boston — "Eastie" to its residents — is a microcosm of issues that are playing out in many communities across the country, issues such as waterfront development, conversion of industrial lands, reuse of obsolete buildings, changing identity, transportation and open-space pressures, and an increasingly diverse population.

Despite all that it has in common with so many other communities, East Boston has some unique physical features: its isolation from other Boston neighborhoods; its unparalleled harbor views of downtown Boston; Logan Airport; the Suffolk Downs racetrack; Chelsea Creek and the tank farms; the Belle Island Marsh nature reserve; Constitution Beach; and the McClellan Highway — Route 1A — which bisects the community. The fact that a community of 39,000 people has five rapid-transit stops is remarkable. As is the 35-foot Madonna — the statue at the Madonna Queen National Shrine at the top of Orient Heights, which offers breathtaking views of Boston. A short trek from the shrine to Saratoga Street, with its views across the Belle Isle Marsh, to Bayswater Street, with its view south to Logan across a cove, offers an imagined alternative history for Boston, one free of trade and politics, leaving a coastal landscape much like Duxbury or Newbury.

These features have in many ways shaped the personality of East Boston. Residents often refer to the experience of living on an island (in fact, the neighborhood was once five islands), and the spirit of island self-sufficiency reinforces Eastie's strong identity. Its residents fight fearlessly to protect their interests, with political skills honed over decades of fighting Logan Airport and Massport. Experts at negotiating mitigation packages, they have created a remarkable open-space network. They have weighed in on waterfront development, working with the BRA and Massport, to ensure public access to the harbor and connections to the rest of the community.

Given this David-and-Goliath history, the most remarkable aspect of East Boston is its openness to change. To be sure, there are residents who resent newcomers — especially those from other cultures. But if any community today can have shared values, the recognition that East Boston has been home to generations of new immigrants seems to bind residents of all ages and ethnicities. Established in 1844, the Temple Ohabei Shalom Cemetery on Wordsworth Street, the first Jewish cemetery in the state, is a reminder of East Boston's once-large Jewish community. Today, neighborhood Catholic churches with previously dwindling congregations are filled again with Latinos who share with previous generations of Irish and Italian immigrants a commitment to church and family. Ethnic stratification has built East Boston as much as the layers of soil that filled its islands and saltmarshes. Still, ethnic diversity is one thing; economic diversity is another. It remains to be seen if money proves to be more divisive than language and skin color.

There are many reasons why Bostonians — or for that matter, anyone who cares about any city — should pay attention to the neighborhood on the other side of the harbor.

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Willy Sclarsic's essay ["Love and the Machine," May/June 2006] reminds me that those of us who are devoted to architecture tend to also believe in the creative ability of a culture to resolve conflicting and negative energies in a positive manner. The failure of Modernism may very well represent, as Sclarsic suggests, a crisis of confidence in this regard. The subsequent spasms of Brutalism, Postmodernism, and Blob-ism have done nothing to restore this confidence. As various contributors to this issue suggest, ugly and "in-your-face" have become a new aesthetic, celebrating rather than sublimating the negative forces at work in the human enterprise. Ugly may be an "intellectual proposition," but it is also a gut reaction, a visceral conviction akin to repulsion, that we are in the presence of dissonance. If architecture traditionally seeks to express and harmonize the values of civilization, why is dissonance a reaction currently sought by our most talented designers? Is the concept of civilization no longer powerful enough to evoke uniting symbols and beautiful buildings? Is it that our anticipation of the future is filled with apprehension? Have we lost faith in ourselves? Or are "novelty and bombast," as James McCown states regarding Charles Jencks' work on iconic buildings, the values of a pluralistic, materialistic culture?

This issue does not paint a pretty picture....

A. Vernon Woodworth AIA
Boston

In addition to the beautiful and the ugly architecture provocatively described and instructively illustrated in the May/June 2006 issue, I would add a third category: the insipid. The latter includes, I would argue, more buildings than the design professions would acknowledge. How so?

Recently sorting through several thousand slides of college and university scenes that I have taken the past 50 years, I was struck by how many buildings were humdrum, stale, hackneyed, and prosaic, regardless of their period, style, or functionality. On the other hand, the best were the best because of palpable characteristics: a perceptible unity of site, scale, materials, detailing, and embracing landscape. The ugly contradicted these expectations in some dramatic manner. They gained my attention and respect, however, because they were visually interesting explorations of uniqueness and, by any reasonable definition, far from insipid, i.e., the curse of mediocrity.

Richard P. Dober
Belmont, Massachusetts

Rather than defending One Western Avenue [May/June 2006], we should question it. Was the parti of overscaled blocks flawed from the start? Can anyone feel comfortable in a windblown space with a three-story building suspended overhead? Why do the vertical windows of the tower bring back bad memories of 1960s hospitals?

I don't buy the argument that those of us who think it is ugly are addicted to the Victorian era, or worse, afraid of the future (though if that is the future we should be afraid). Perhaps it really is, well, ugly!

One has only to walk six blocks east to find the Allston branch library, an award-winning project by the same firm. It is unapologetically Modern, yet has a pedestrian scale, rich textures of wood, metal, and stone, and rooms with courtyards full of natural light. In my view, those are essential qualities appreciated by professionals and laypeople alike — and those are the qualities missing from One Western Avenue.

So let's not make it so complicated. It may not be easy to attain beauty, but it sure is better to strive for it than to suggest we should all learn to like ugliness.

Tamara M. Roy AIA
Cambridge, Massachusetts

With no disrespect intended to an esteemed colleague, I must register a dissenting opinion ["In Defense of One Western Avenue," May/June 2006]. Where to start?

Contrary to the implied sneer, it is an incontrovertible fact that "when it comes to architecture...the stakes are higher," particularly if that architecture forms the face of a significant, very visible, very prestigious, even iconographic precinct of the city. It cannot be turned off or avoided; it will not go away. Barring some disaster, it's essentially permanent. Next, comparing (favorably) OWA to Our Lady of Recombinant DNA next door [the Genzyme building] is like comparing Attila the Hun to Genghis Khan. The obvious conclusion is that they are both atrocious. Next, the Simmons Hall dormitory at MIT, held up here as an example of non-retrograde architectural taste, may be visually interesting, but fails badly the test of successful domestic architecture by being cold, confusing, and generally user-unfriendly. Next, OWA "is unapologetic about its austerity," but how much additional structure cost is required to fly the horizontal element unsupported across an opening so undefined and otherworldly in scale that it feels less like a portal than a hole in the fabric of the universe? Also, masonry, unless arched (thanks, Mr. Kahn), carries its loads straight down — always has — and besides not wanting to span (the horizontal element), it doesn't want to be interrupted by window openings that courageously refuse to align (the vertical element). Sure, you can do anything with enough lintel steel, but I thought the point being made was about austerity.

I really like the Allston library, by the way.

Robert B. Vogel AIA
Charlestown, Massachusetts

Your "Pretty Ugly" discussion [May/June 2006] doesn't contain a single use of the word "function," as if your panelists were

embarrassed by it. Yet function, both physical and cultural, still determines form. Every spot on a butterfly's wing has function and every detail of a marble Greek temple imitates its early wooden structure. Frank Gehry can make fun of time and gravity but, in the end, time and gravity will make fun of Frank Gehry. Laymen like arched windows not because they are ignorant of architectural history, but because the arch imitates the shape of a human head. Our supermarket owners spend money on fake gables not because they like to waste money, but because they need to catch a human eye with a hill on the horizon of the flat roof. Russian constructivists rhapsodized the machine, but the machine has even stricter functions than nature because it's inferior to it. When we create the "second nature" of human habitat, we have to remember our bodily functions. When we get tired of the current aesthetics, we ought to know that our fatigue is also one of those functions. Robert Venturi didn't give up on modern architecture but gave it a break (and a brake). Now it's time to get back to the beauty of the machine, but if that machine will look like Gehry's broken boxes or Machado and Silvetti's unbroken boxes, it won't fly — not because they are beautiful or ugly, but because they are dysfunctional.

Anatol Zukerman
Newton, Massachusetts

Your provocative "Rogues' Gallery" in the May/June 2006 issue contained one notable error. There is no evidence that Paul Rudolph's Art and Architecture Building was burned by students or that the serious fire that took place there in June 1969 was an act of arson.

Robert A. M. Stern FAIA
Dean
J. M. Hoppin Professor of Architecture
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

Serious dialogue regarding senior living is typically only found in trade journals and not the mainstream architectural press, perhaps because the building type is most often reflective of traditional forms and thereby not considered at the vanguard of design. However, it is one of the most serious societal issues we face and it deserves more. Hats off to *ArchitectureBoston* for taking the lead ["Generations" March/April 2006]. There was real substance to all the articles, but I found "Where Will the Children Play" to be particularly thought-provoking.

Topics such as integration versus isolation and what appeals (or does not) to Silents or Boomers or Xs and Ys are important issues that must be addressed if we're going to get senior living right in the 21st century.

My personal belief is that we're moving in the right direction, but we're not there yet. The retirement community of the future will be a mix of hospitality, entertainment, and adaptable housing, loosely structured around a timeshare-like ownership plan. This model will allow for travel, diversity, and flexibility, accommodating a wide range of different lifestyles. Buying a retirement-community package would be like buying cable television: you can buy either á la carte or bundled. Either way, you can tailor it to your liking.

Whether you call it senior living, generations, or age, it's not a very sexy topic for architects, but clearly it's an important one. Thanks for putting it out there.

James M. Warner FAIA
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Editor's note: Due to the volume, eloquence, passion, and, in some cases, length of the letters we have received in response to our "Ugly" and "Generations" issues, we have made all these letters available online. Please visit: www.architectureboston.com/uglyletters and www.architectureboston.com/generationsletters.

We want to hear from you. Letters may be e-mailed to epadjen@architects.org or sent to *ArchitectureBoston*, 52 Broad Street, Boston, MA 02109. Letters may be edited for clarity and length, and must include your name, address, and daytime telephone number. Length should not exceed 300 words.

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ArchitectureBoston is mailed to members of the Boston Society of Architects and AIA members in New England and New York City. Subscription rate for others is $26 per year. Call 617.951.1433 x228 or e-mail architectureboston@architects.org.

ArchitectureBoston is custom-published bimonthly for the Boston Society of Architects by The Pohly Company.
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The redesign of *ArchitectureBoston* was supported by a grant from the Graham Foundation.

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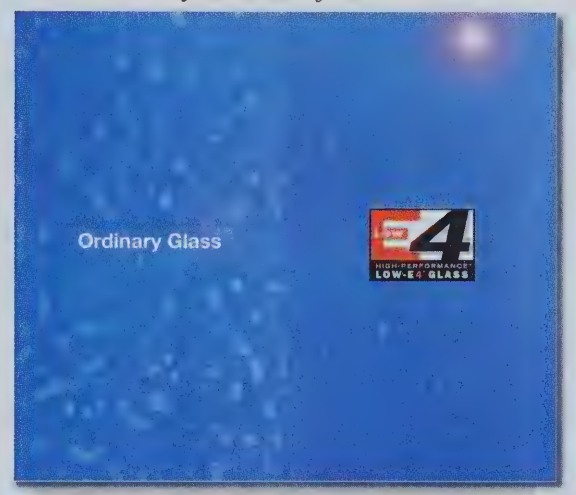

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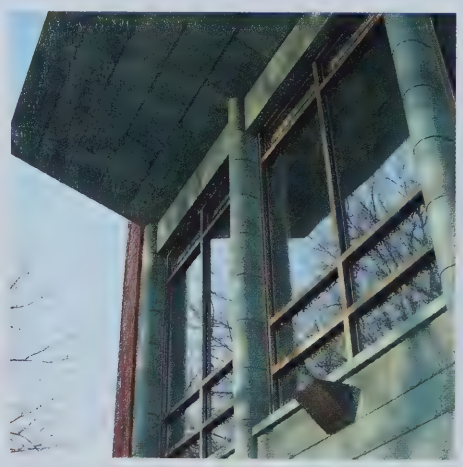

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Angle of Repose, Anne Whiston Spirn, 2005.

Looking at Landscape: Environmental Puzzles from Three Photographers

Harvard Museum of Natural History, Cambridge, Massachusetts
April 29, 2006 – January 7, 2007

If a single thread connects the three photographers in this exhibition, it is not necessarily the content of their work, but that each initially used photography to amplify investigations into their respective fields. Landscape architect Anne Whiston Spirn uses photography to explore sites: landscapes designed, cultivated, or simply occupied. Her interest in the large-scale landscape is less the grand view than the smaller details that humanize it: the wooden structures surrounding newly planted trees at Blenheim Palace, or well-worn paths into the Scottish Highlands. Alex MacLean, after studying architecture, started his aerial photography business 30 years ago. His work for commercial clients led to independent investigations of the ways Americans build, farm, and live on the land. His aerial views transform the banality of the grid, both urban and rural, into elegant renderings of objects stripped to their elemental forms. Camilo José Vergara, who trained as a sociologist, first used photography to document the disintegration of urban neighborhoods. While often compared to the early 20th-century photographer Jacob Riis, who linked photographic work to urban reform, Vergara's photographs more closely resemble historic ruins — buildings lost to the process of decay. His long-term documentation of the abandoned neighborhoods of Camden, New Jersey, with the impending loss of the histories of those who lived there, is heartbreaking.

After an initial infatuation with the new medium of photography, the 19th-century writer John Ruskin expressed great skepticism of its vaunted ability to portray truth. That concern dominated much of photography criticism in the 20th century. The challenge to the viewer of this intriguing exhibit is to find the often-elusive truths about the process of landscape change captured in the photographs.

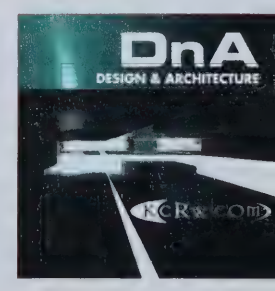
Phyllis Andersen is a landscape historian in Boston.

DnA: Design and Architecture

KCRW
www.kcrw.com/show/de

I admit it — I'm a podcast addict. It's a recent problem. When I got my video iPod last November, I wasn't even sure what a podcast was. Now I regularly visit the websites of radio shows and "subscribe" (it's usually free). When my computer is connected to the Internet, my iTunes software checks in with all my subscription sites, downloads any new programs (podcasts), and then transfers them when I drop the iPod in its cradle for its nightly charge. As I head off for work in the morning, I turn on my iPod and check to see what's new.

One of my favorites is *DnA: Design and Architecture*, from KCRW in Santa Monica. The host, Frances Anderton, talks to design leaders about "the latest in products, fashion, graphics, architecture, and more." A recent program focused on Jane Jacobs, Ferraris, and Jodie Foster's favorite building. Subscription is free through iTunes (old episodes are on the website), and KCRW also offers other terrific podcasts on movies, books, television, politics, and popular culture.



Peter Kuttner FAIA is president of Cambridge Seven Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

SoWa Art Walk

Boston
May 20 – 21, 2006

I think it was Pete Seeger who sang, "Where have all the architects gone?" Or he should have. Because they're a practical lot, a sizable number of architects have dodged out for greater or lesser pursuits. Many of my own friends bailed to make money (eek!) or to decrease the sweat-to-product ratio.

The SoWa Art Walk suggested a perfectly viable option for the architect considering architectural mutiny. (SoWa is an acronym for South of Washington Street; South End developer and property owner Mario Nicosia invented the term and has paid big bucks to promote it.) Once I looked past the tea-bag art and dog portraits, I discovered many artists with architectural backgrounds, delighted to have their own work on the walls. Their bios inevitably began, "So and so, originally trained as an architect..." — presumably a stamp of approval.

Xima Hulings Lee is an example. Surrounded by her 3-D terraria — sort of Joseph Cornell meets Hello Kitty — she told me about her six years working for Taniguchi in Japan. Yes, *that* Taniguchi. As she spoke, I tried to imagine her doing stair details for the minimalist maestro, but it was tough. She looked so *happy*.

Polly Becker was down the hall. She's not an architect, though she is married to one (Michael Grant). She's a talented illustrator whose work (example above) graces the editorial pages of America's best magazines. She hung her illustrative assemblages on the wall, hastily threw her retro ink drawings on museum board into a box like old albums, and spread publications featuring her work across a large table.

With more than 200 participating artists, the Art Walk also showcases the vibrancy of the SoWa neighborhood. But anyone still doubting the rejuvenating power of art should visit James Paradis, who earned his BFA from Mass College of Art at the age of 72. Sketching figures among his crumpled car-crash oils, he modestly handed me his business card. Below the address, the word "artist" had been crossed out in ballpoint pen. I asked him why. He said, "I was told that no one can proclaim himself an artist. That's for someone else to say." Clearly an artist who was not trained as an architect.

Rachel Levitt is a designer and writer.

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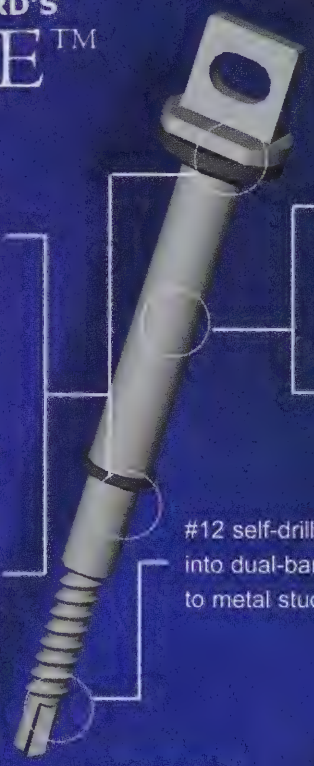

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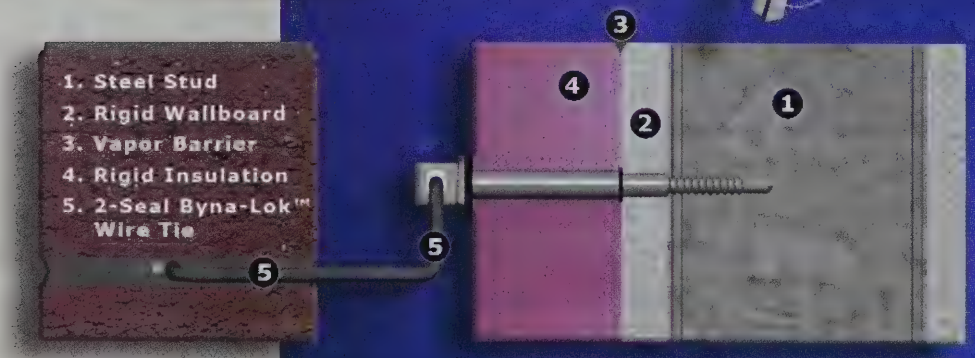

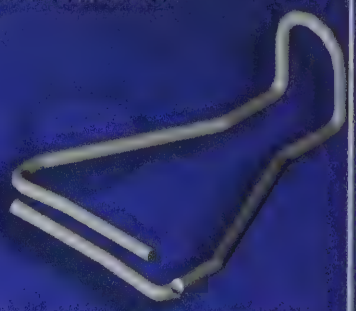

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Where the Girls Are

The event: "Introduce a Girl to Engineering," hosted annually by Judith Nitsch Engineering, one of the country's largest woman-owned civil engineering firms.

The setting: Harvard's Maxwell Dworkin Building, donated by Microsoft's Bill Gates and Steve Ballmer. "Maxwell" and "Dworkin" were their mothers' maiden names — underscoring, as Judy Nitsch will good-humoredly tell the assembled girls and the (mostly female) adults who have accompanied them here, "the huge importance of the *mothers* of engineers."

9:35 Fifty girls, ranging from sixth to twelfth graders, roam the lobby trying to fill bingo cards. The game requires them to quiz women engineers, who are wearing various emblematic stickers. Two girls charge up to an engineer whose emblem is an athletic shoe. "Do you coach and play soccer?"

The engineer smiles. "I don't."

The girls quickly identify the only other relevant possibility on their bingo cards. "Have you run nine half-marathons?"

The engineer nods and hands them stickers. One girl muses, "So how many full marathons would that be?" And immediately answers her own question: "Four and a half."

9:42 Across the lobby, a young, pretty engineer is acknowledging to a girl that yes, she's the one who was involved with beauty pageants.

"How?" the girl asks.

"I was a beauty queen," the engineer says, matter-of-factly.

"Oh." The girl doesn't seem to know what to say next.

The engineer continues easily: "And I was at MIT. The guys there said, 'Girls like you don't even *talk* to guys like us.' So I was like, 'Do you have a date Saturday night? Let me take you *shopping* first.'"

9:50 "I've written a book on mechanical vibrations," another engineer is telling a girl. "For example, rotary imbalance. You know when the washing machine will suddenly shake the whole house?"

"And someone had to solve the problem of jogging with a CD player," the girl's mother puts in.

The engineer beams. "Exactly."

10:07 From the podium of the lecture hall, Judy Nitsch explains that the bingo icebreaker was designed to demonstrate that engineers are inquisitive. "You had to ask questions to finish your bingo cards. And," she adds, "I personally would like to thank the three people who asked me if I was involved with beauty pageants."

10:15 Introducing today's theme of the versatility of an engineering degree, Judy shows a series of slides of engineers who are famous — but not for being engineers. Jimmy Carter, who earned a degree in nuclear engineering. Herbert Hoover: mining engineering. Montel Williams: naval engineering.

An image of a smoldering hunk appears on the screen. "And who knows who this is?"

No hands go up: the girls either don't know or won't say. Nor do any of the mothers cop to recognizing the guy, who turns out to be a star on *All My Children*.

10:25 Judy cites some statistics on women in the profession. In the US, only 10 percent of the engineers and only 20 percent of the engineering students are female. (In her own firm, the figure is 42 percent.)

"You'll be in the minority," she tells the girls, "but you'll be remembered. This is a profession that really welcomes women, smart women. You have to like math and science, and you have to like to figure things out."

10:37 A panel discussion begins: five women who have used their engineering backgrounds in different ways. One is an expert in hydrology and storm-water management. Another got an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering, went into sales, and is working on a PhD in business administration at Harvard. The next is also pursuing a Harvard doctorate, and developing a way to deliver a new tuberculosis vaccine. The fourth specialized in superfund sites and hazardous

waste clean-up, and now helps Harvard to keep its various properties in compliance with environmental regulations.

"I went to MIT," the fifth panelist says. "And part of the orientation was the women's bathroom tour — back then, there were so few of them that they wanted to make sure you knew where they were." She works now as an environmental lawyer.

10:44 "Why did you decide to study engineering?" the moderator asks the panel.

"Because I liked to take things apart."

"Because my father was an engineer, and I knew he'd pay for me to study it. Once he brought home a non-working pinball machine, and said, 'Figure it out and you'll have a pinball machine.' It was fun."

"Because I won a prize at a science fair in eighth grade. The guy who was judging was a professor in Boston, and he was interested in what I'd done. He said, 'Did you measure this?' And I said, 'No. I'm just trying to graduate from eighth grade.'"

"Such interesting stories," another panelist says. She shakes her head. "I got into it for the boys."

10:49 Various answers when the moderator asks what characteristics make a successful engineering candidate: curiosity; practicality; persistence; being meticulous. One panelist says, "Laziness." The others look at her, startled. She laughs. "Well, in a weird way, yeah. You don't want to do things the way they've always been done — you want to find something easier."

10:53 The moderator's final question: How has engineering helped you succeed in your subsequent career?

The sales and business expert: "It gave me a voice at the table. A lot of the coolest companies out there are cool because they're full of engineers. I speak their language."

The environmental lawyer: "I went to a meeting as a lawyer, and the engineers told me that no, their plant couldn't possibly generate less pollution. So I went to the next meeting wearing my brass rat. MIT's symbol is a beaver — but shrunk down to the size of a ring it looks like a rat, so they call it the brass rat. And once those engineers saw the brass rat, they took me seriously, and we negotiated a successful conclusion."

11:00 "Any questions for the panel?" the moderator asks.

The girls don't have any. The mothers have a lot. What should you do to get into a good college? Are there extracurricular activities that might be useful? Summer camps? Judy rattles off information; the mothers write it all down.

Finally one girl raises her hand. "When you're an engineer, do you still have time to hang out with your friends?"

11:17 Judy introduces the next activity, a treasure hunt. The girls are divided into teams — half with maps and half with handheld GPS devices — and sent out into the nearby quads of Harvard Law School to track down clues.

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Most of the parents stay in the lecture hall, where they ask Judy and the other engineers about challenges facing girls in math and science.

11:45 Outside in the wind and heavy rain, a little GPS group is struggling to get the device to work. One girl holds it in the air above her head, then checks to see if the coordinates have appeared. Nothing. She holds it up again. "You are here," a professorial-looking man tells the girls as he walks by.

11:50 Still no GPS signal. "Maybe we need a more open space," one girl suggests.

"There's a volleyball court over there," another notices.

On their way to the volleyball court, the group passes a bench that's surrounded by other girls, who either have maps or luckier GPS devices. Clearly they have zeroed in on a clue, but the dud-GPS group trudges honorably by without looking.

11:51 On the volleyball court, one girl reads aloud from the plastic-covered sheet of GPS directions: "Needs clear view of sky."

"Sky," the girl holding the device echoes solemnly, shooting her arm above her head again. She checks the device. "Ah. Here we go."

11:53 The device leads them back to the bench, now deserted. They find the clue taped to the back. "Organizing and making processes work better is the focus of _____ engineers."

12:25 The treasure hunt has led the girls to envelopes taped to the undersides of seats in the lecture hall. They contain numbers and a cryptogram which, when deciphered, calls for ordering the numbers from smallest to biggest. The girls quickly do this — 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9 — but the combination fails to unlock the briefcase in which the treasure is stored.

"Engineers love to figure things out," Judy reminds them. And in just a minute they do: the numbers need to be ordered not by value, but visually, according to the size of the printed numerals.

A girl attacks the briefcase, fingers busy with the combination. Click. "Got it."

1:45 After a pizza lunch, the group reconvenes in the lecture hall for prizes. Every team is singled out for having demonstrated one of the characteristics of successful engineers: resourcefulness, ingenuity, enthusiasm.

1:55 After a warm round of applause, the event breaks up — a day of crisp black-and-white enlivened by some strategic shots of giddy pink.

As people begin to leave, a shimmery tiny girl confidently introduces herself to Judy, adding that she goes to a science-and-math charter school. And then comes a string of mothers, who all want to thank Judy for the event, and who all say, "I wish there'd been something like this when I was that age." ■

Joan Wickersham is a writer in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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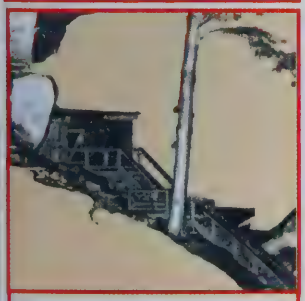

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Changing Times

East Boston will soon be home to 1,600 new condos and apartments, most of them luxury waterfront units. Will EaBo become the new identity for the neighborhood formerly known as Eastie?

Participants

Nina Brown is a landscape architect and principal of Brown Richardson and Rowe in Boston. Her work includes a number of projects in East Boston: Bremen Street Park; Memorial Stadium Park; Constitution Beach; the Massport Southwest Service Edge Buffer; the master plan for Saratoga Park; and a renovation of the ballfield at American Legion Park.

Al Caldarelli is the executive director of the East Boston Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit that has developed a number of housing and community projects in the neighborhood.

David Carlson AIA is a senior architect with the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

Nancy Ludwig AIA is a principal of ICON Architects in Boston, the designer of the Maverick Landing and Carlton Wharf project, and the principal consultant for the East Boston Master Plan.

Elizabeth Padjen FAIA is the editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

Saul Perlera is the owner and founder of Perlera Real Estate, Inc. Originally from El Salvador, he has been a resident of East Boston since 1986.

Lowell Richards is the director of port planning for Massport.

Madeleine Steczynski is the founder and director of Zumix, a youth arts organization, and is a resident of East Boston.

Elizabeth Padjen: Significant residential development in East Boston is a new phenomenon. In the last few decades, construction in the neighborhood has generally meant new transportation infrastructure. So let's start with the elephant in the room, the creature that has shaped so much of East Boston today: Logan Airport. What is the reality of Logan Airport for residents? Is it part of your life? Do you hear it? How do you cope with it? How much of the issue of Logan Airport comes from the memory of battles fought, such as the loss of the Wood Island Park to airport expansion, and how much is actually due to the hassle factor in your day-to-day lives? I wonder if its presence is akin to what I call the West End Syndrome — a devastating loss for those who remember the history, but not something that newcomers care much about.

Saul Perlera: I wish it was only a memory, but it's a reality. Logan is there: you hear the planes, you smell the fumes. It's going to be there forever, and you learn to cope with it.

Al Caldarelli: But things have changed for the better from the days when the airport really was a detriment to life in East Boston. Technological advances in aircraft and fuels have had a significant positive impact. A lot of the airport traffic has been re-routed away from the local streets. A lot of houses have been soundproofed

Clockwise from top left: Porter 156, Architect: Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype. Maverick Landing and Carlton Wharf, Architect: ICON Architects. Piers Park, Landscape architect: Pressley Associates, Inc. Hodge Boiler Works (proposed), Architect: Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects. East Pier (Portside at Pier One), Architect: ADD Inc.

with new windows, courtesy of Massport. So, to new people, the airport is not the threatening neighbor that it once was.

Lowell Richards: If you're close to a runway end, you still know it's there. But there are certainly parts of East Boston where the consequences of the presence of Logan are not as great.

Madeleine Steczynski: It definitely depends on your neighborhood, and can even vary from block to block. I lived for a short while near the backside of Eagle Hill. It was really horrible there, particularly in the middle of the night — once or twice a week, big cargo flights would pass over and all the car alarms would go off, and the house would shake as if you were being bombed. I live in the Jeffries Point area now and don't hear much of it, although I sometimes smell it.

From my perspective, the bigger issue is not so much the planes overhead but the way in which the community has been split up by tunnels and highways in order to provide access to the airport. Paris Street now has a tunnel in the middle of it, so we have a weird disconnect. When people say they live on Paris Street, you have to ask them which side. What would have been our main street, Meridian Street, has a big scar in the middle of it because of that tunnel.

Saul Perlera: But air rights over the tunnel are a possibility. If we get enough development in that area, it would be economically feasible to build above it and restore the continuity of the street. There's already a huge demand for commercial space there.

David Carlson: East Boston has a tradition of that sort of radical change over time. It was originally five islands. As you walk through the neighborhood, you can see that the street grids come together in ways that reveal the original villages. It has grown in terms of its land form, from a series of islands to a single land mass. The airport was actually one of the largest landfill projects in the city.

On top of that, the neighborhood evolved in response to changes in infrastructure: technology; transportation; and the industrial uses congregating around the harbor that effectively made the waterfront unavailable to the residents of East Boston. That's why, to my mind, the taking of Wood Island for the airport resonates so much: that recreational land became precious.

There are a lot of old scars that are being healed through an improved interface with Massport and Logan through spinoffs from the Central Artery project, such as new parks and the new East Boston Greenway that help connect the dots along an old rail corridor. It's all transforming the old scars into something that makes a better community.

Nina Brown: The intermodal aspect of those improvements is worth mentioning, too — they will introduce new bike and pedestrian paths connecting to a number of T stops. Several segments of the East Boston Greenway have already been completed. The Greenway starts near the edge of Boston Harbor and goes through Bremen Street and Memorial Stadium parks, and to the Airport MBTA Station, with connections to Jeffries Point. And it ultimately will continue on to Constitution Beach and Belle Isle Marsh.

Elizabeth Padjen: The master plan that the city released five years ago clearly embraces the notion of making connections within the community, of trying to make up for the ills of the past. I can't help but think that East Boston is to some degree a test of what we've learned as planners and urban designers. We've come a long way since urban renewal clearances in the '50s and '60s, the megaprojects of the '60s and '70s, and even the largely successful neighborhood planning that was accomplished in Boston in the '80s. It seems as though all those lessons have been applied to East Boston.

Nancy Ludwig: The lessons are still being learned. One small example is Maverick Landing — the Hope VI redevelopment of the Maverick Gardens public housing project. With the cooperation of the City of Boston, we cut new streets and extended them down to the waterfront. Previously, you wouldn't have known that the waterfront was there. The exploration of appropriate waterfront uses is very exciting, because people are embracing the idea of stretching the public realm down to the water.

Nina Brown: The early megaprojects — the Sumner and Callahan tunnels, Logan Airport — radicalized the residents of East Boston. These activists have a big role in many of these new projects. For example, many aspects of Bremen Street Park resulted from community pressure. With the Boston Natural Areas Network, they persuaded the Trust for Public Land to help them acquire the Conrail property for the Greenway. They then collaborated with a variety of public agencies to make the Greenway part of the Big Dig's Bremen Street Park. This project didn't originate with an urban designer laying out ideas and making them happen. It came from the ground up.

Lowell Richards: I don't disagree with that, but I think a little more credit can be given to urban design. The quality of urban design that you're going to see in the Pier One and Clippership

The New Face of Eastie

Project	Units	Developer	Architect
Maverick Landing and Carlton Wharf	426	Trinity	ICON Architects
Hodge Boiler Works	119	Philip DeNormandie	Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects
Clippership Wharf	417	Winn Development	CBT Architects
East Pier (Portside at Pier One)	550	Roseland	ADD Inc
Porter 156	216	Metric Corporation and ELV Associates	Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype

The bigger issue is not so much the planes overhead but the way in which the community has been split up by tunnels and highways in order to provide access to the airport. — Madeleine Steczynski

developments is very different from what you would have seen if those sites had been developed in the '70s or early '80s. Even if East Boston residents were not as active and involved as they have been, we would still see that difference simply because urban designers — and many developers — have become more sophisticated in knowing how to take advantage of a complex site like the East Boston waterfront. And obviously, these projects have also been enhanced greatly by neighborhood input, which is clearly very sophisticated in terms of planning concepts but also very sophisticated in understanding how to obtain leverage.

Elizabeth Padjen: Who are the activists?

Lowell Richards: Who aren't the activists? That's the easier question.

Elizabeth Padjen: The experience in many communities with a lot of new immigrants is that the newcomers tend not to participate for a variety of reasons: they don't understand the give-and-take process, they don't have time to get involved, they may be afraid of public processes because of experiences in their home countries, and of course many have language difficulties. Is that an issue in East Boston? Is the Latino community involved? Or is it the old-timers who are waving the flags?

Al Caldarelli: We've been an immigrant community forever. The Irish arrived in the mid-1800s; by the late 1800s, after the arrival of Russian Jews who worked as laborers on the waterfront, we were the largest Jewish community in New England. And the Italian immigration followed right after that. We see the same thing happening now. When we started the East Boston Community Development Corporation, the community was 85 percent Italian. As of the 2000 census, Latinos were 39 percent of the population; East Boston as a whole was 50 percent non-white. One of the things I'm proudest of in East Boston has been the seamless change. I think the Latino population in East Boston will soon be electing the public officials, much the same way that all the other immigrant groups did.

Saul Perlera: So far, the Latinos haven't really taken an active role in the actual policy-making. However, they have been the essence of the neighborhood, making a change in a different way, by going about their business — raising families, working, starting businesses. If anyone brought the real estate prices up in the neighborhood, it was the Latinos. We were there, renting and establishing roots until we were ready to buy. The city had a lot of programs available to help first-time home-buyers.

Al Caldarelli: But home ownership is still a challenge. We always looked forward to the day when the airport's effects on the community would be ameliorated. Now that that has happened, a lot of people are being priced out of East Boston. What scares me about the new waterfront development is that even though everybody is making an effort to include affordable units, the definition of affordable is not the definition that's acceptable to my constituents. When "affordable" means that someone who's earning $60,000 is going to get the chance to buy one of these condos, that's great, but there's a whole community that needs to rent at an affordable rate. They're not ready for home ownership. We have an influx of immigrant families who originally came to East Boston because of affordable rents. I don't know if that will continue if these prices rise or even stay where they are.

Elizabeth Padjen: What makes this model of waterfront development different from Atlantic City? Atlantic City invested in development along the boardwalk, but the neighborhoods just a few blocks inland are falling apart.

Lowell Richards: In Atlantic City, people don't live on the waterfront; they visit casinos and they go away. Historically, the waterfront strip there was a resort area, distinct from the rest of the community. In East Boston, there are a number of reasons why the inland blocks have more potential. The new development won't be an enclave; there will be a lot of natural integration. The inland blocks could conceivably stay as they are. Or, more likely, they could gradually experience conversions so we will see a steady curve down from the water in terms of price-per-square-foot, while values generally rise in the neighborhood as a whole. There are a number of people who used to live in East Boston, left, did very well, and want to come back. They are familiar with the more central areas of East Boston and many of them will settle there.

Nina Brown: Another reason why East Boston won't become another Atlantic City is that it is not a linear strip. There are pedestrian connections through the development sites and the parks such as the Harborwalk, the East Boston Greenway, Marginal Street, and the Golden Stairs. The new connections all build upon the strengths that already exist in East Boston.

Al Caldarelli: And there's also the fact that prices are also going up in the interior of the community, not just the waterfront. That has its downside. We have waiting lists five years out for families looking for rental units. They had to close the rental applications at Maverick Landing after taking 5,000 applications.

Lowell Richards: But that's been happening without a single luxury condominium actually built on the waterfront — they are all either under construction, in the documents stage, or awaiting final approvals.

Saul Perlera: That's a very interesting point. Only one waterfront project has actually been built — Maverick Landing. Most of the change so far has occurred in small developments in the areas further inland. Many people are spending money on restoring their houses and bringing them up to code. The condo conversions have been incredible in the past two years. Three years ago we had 14 condominiums on the market. Today we have 159, and 33 are under agreement in any given month. People are converting three-deckers left and right. As we speak, probably 20 buildings are being converted right now. Some of the developers don't understand that not every house has good condo potential, because a condo buyer is looking for a certain community in a building in terms of neighbors and co-owners, and also for a certain character, such as high ceilings, moldings, medallions, marble mantels. Some of them just don't have it. Those are the ones that stay longer on the market and also tend to sell for a lot less.

Nancy Ludwig: It's important to remember that a lot of the pressure on real estate in East Boston comes from the pressure on Boston as a whole. When I moved to Charlestown 20-odd years ago, that neighborhood was quite similar. Other neighborhoods that are closer to downtown have experienced the same pressure, and it eventually pushes out to other communities.

Elizabeth Padjen: How does East Boston's existing building stock respond to these pressures?

Lowell Richards: The dominant structure style in East Boston is wood-frame, with a relatively small footprint. That's different from other neighborhoods, such as the South End, which is mostly masonry, or Charlestown, which has some wood-frame structures mixed with masonry buildings and slightly larger footprints. It's probably closest to Dorchester. But the building stock will affect the future of the neighborhood — it's not really suited for conversion to Gaps and Starbucks and other chains that might be interested in the rising economics. The building stock favors the small owner-operated shops and businesses, now the bodegas, and previously the Italian-owned corner stores. I don't think the advent of 1,600 units, even if they're luxury units, is going to dramatically change the socioeconomic picture of East Boston as a whole.

It's interesting to compare East Boston with the South End, which has undergone a wholesale change. The South End in the 1960s and '70s had a very good building stock — buildings originally of high enough quality that they withstood 30 or 40 years of declining maintenance — but it was an extremely challenging social environment. But because of the quality of the buildings and their relatively large footprints, they accommodated

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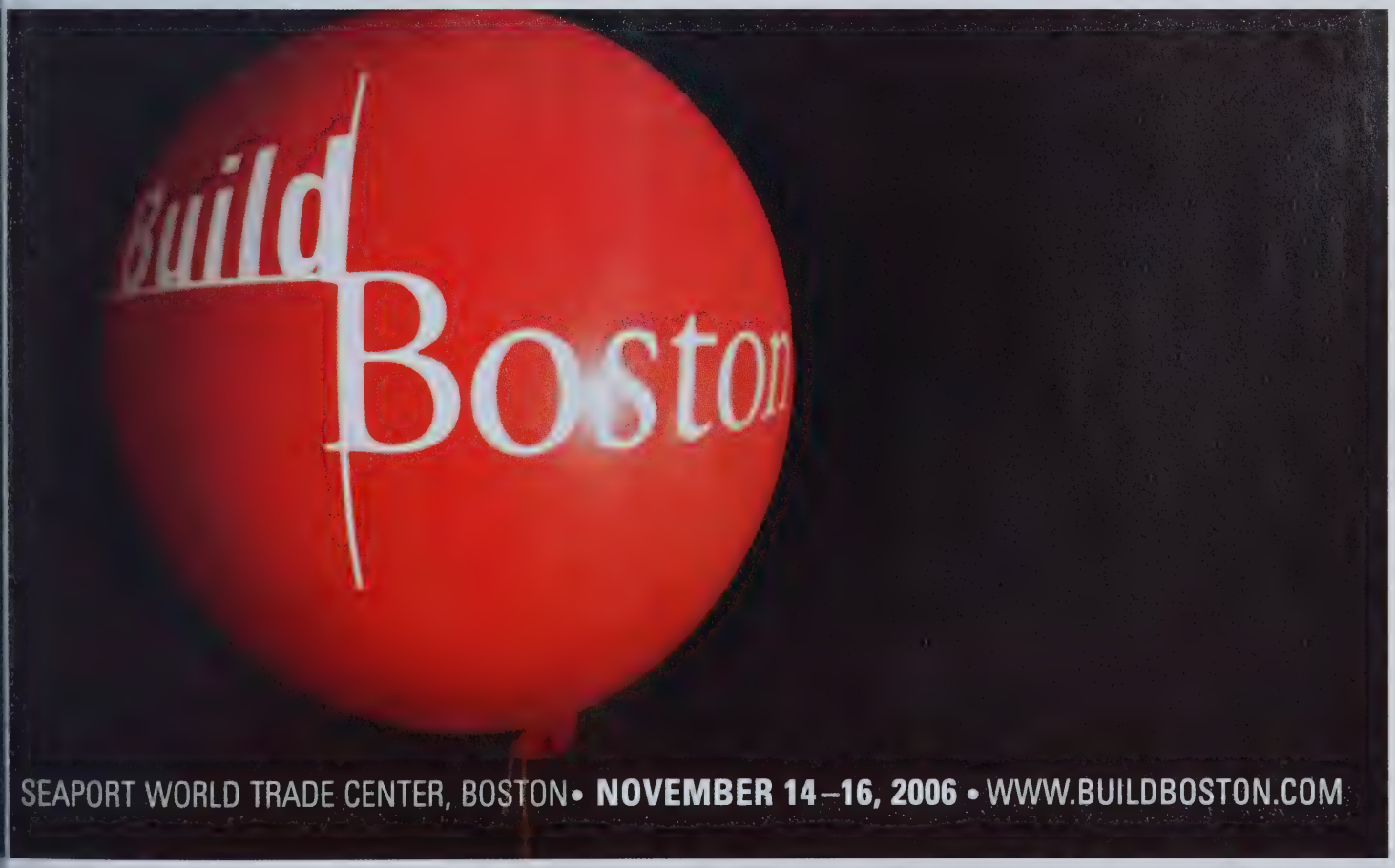
Physical differences do contribute to the social differences in neighborhoods. The city is trying to balance changes that occur with each real-estate cycle. — David Carlson

change over time — the physical infrastructure remained while the social aspects changed. It's harder to imagine how you could keep the physical structure of everything three blocks back from the water in East Boston and see that same wholesale social change.

David Carlson: Physical differences do contribute to the social differences in neighborhoods. The city is trying to balance changes that occur with each real-estate cycle. Right now, for example, the city is especially interested in holding on to young people who come to our colleges and universities and who want to stay in the city, to invest in the city, to grow here, to find jobs. As those people discover East Boston, they will help to temper the pressures that will come from the waterfront development. There will never be a Newbury Street in East Boston, but it's useful to remember that Newbury Street itself has evolved; it was entirely residential when it was first built. I suspect that the character of, say, Maverick Square, will be better defined in coming years, and that it will regain some of the feel that it had in the early 20th century. I don't envision chains like the Gap or the big-box stores, but I do think we'll see the continuing growth of small businesses that add to the vibrancy of the community.

Nina Brown: The character of the existing buildings is an important point. East Boston was part of a tour for the recent annual conference on New Urbanism. The participants loved it, because East Boston typifies a lot of the principles of New Urbanism: people living above their stores; houses that are close together; small-scale structures; walkability; easy connections to open space and mass transit. It demonstrates that the New Urbanism is really just the old urbanism.

Nancy Ludwig: And I think a lot of the new development will take its clues from those patterns and attributes — even if it doesn't take precisely the same form. The goal at Maverick Landing was to give



I have always felt safe there. In comparison with other cities or other Boston neighborhoods, we're still probably one of the safest areas around. — Saul Perlera

everybody a traditional stoop on the street and a private space in the back. The public park is not at the center of the development, but on the corner, across from the church.

Madeleine Steczynski: At the same time, I'm sorry to see what we are losing to new development. I was sad that we lost the old Hodge Boiler Works structure. There are so many views of the East Boston waterfront that are gorgeous the way they are, looking across those dilapidated piers and weird old structures. You can't bring them back once they're gone. I'm glad that the old 80 Border Street building will be saved — it's a former shipping building that's being renovated as artist workspace.

Saul Perlera: I agree — it could have been torn down or converted to luxury loft condos. Artists have played a major role in the renaissance of East Boston. It wouldn't be fair to say to them, OK, thanks for giving us what we need but now we're selling the building to private developers, so get out. There's something nice about the fact that the East Boston CDC [Community Design Center] is facilitating its continued use as artist studio space, except that it's now going to be an updated building.

Elizabeth Padjen: What are some of the things that contribute to the quality of life in East Boston?

Saul Perlera: Parks. The waterfront public access is going to be so amazing, and I'm excited about that. But Piers Park has already made a huge difference in quality of life, as will Bremen Street Park and Memorial Stadium Park when they are completed.

Nancy Ludwig: Yet you're just a short walk from a very vibrant commercial center, which has unique restaurants and retailers. Come into Maverick Square, and there is life. Great Italian and Latino restaurants.

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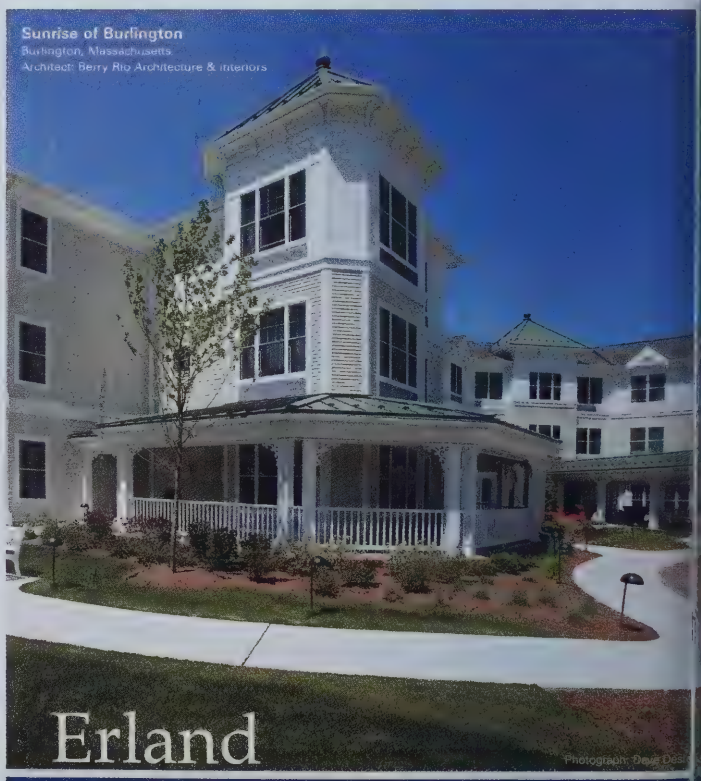

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Elizabeth Padjen: Does East Boston feel safe?

Saul Perlera: Of course. I have always felt safe there. In comparison with other cities or other Boston neighborhoods, we're still probably one of the safest areas around.

Madeleine Steczynski: I have new tenants on the first floor of my three-family who moved here this year, and they've completely fallen in love with East Boston. It's the first place in the city they've ever lived in that felt like a neighborhood, meaning that you see families outside, and people want to know who you are and what you're doing. People are nosy in a good way. East Boston is friendly, unlike the general reputation of the city.

I lived in Jamaica Plain for a while, and JP is filled with activists as well. But this is a different ballgame. Going to community meetings in East Boston is like going to the theater — there is so much drama. I have grown so respectful of a handful of activists, people who have dedicated their lives to fighting for a better quality of life for East Boston for the last 20 years. One problem we have right now is that a lot of those groups are made up of people who are getting old. It's incredible to go to those meetings and realize how much knowledge is in the room, to see how they work. But I was recently at a Piers Park committee meeting, and I was the youngest person in the room. Where are the new people who are going to help carry this torch? You have to pass the history along.

We talked earlier about the involvement of the Latino community. Most of our current public officials are Italian-Americans. And yet they're very much aware of the shift in population. They want to make sure that they have the support of the Latino community. I have Latino friends who end up in awkward positions when they're all of a sudden asked to represent an entire community of Latinos, who all have very different needs and different reasons for being here. But there is definitely a sense that politicians are listening and trying desperately to connect, and there are certainly people in the Latino community with political ambitions. But they are all very different from the community activists, the people who go to public meetings and fight on behalf of a new park or safety or clean streets — the little issues that make the quality of life. I don't see many of the new people integrating into those groups.

Lowell Richards: That's not unique to East Boston, though. If you look at the history of community activism from the '50s through the '70s, you find a population of blue-collar men who got out of work at four o'clock, and women at home who cared intensely about their neighborhood and their family. They had some scheduling flexibility — they could go to meetings that started at 6:30. If you look at many immigrant communities now, everyone is working, sometimes two or three jobs. In East Boston, where we're getting an influx of white-collar professionals, people go to work at 9:00 and come home at 7:00. People think they can be involved through the

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Internet, but it's a very different dynamic from showing up at a community meeting and haranguing the elected officials or the agency folks. So I totally agree with what you're saying, but it's part of a much larger societal evolution, and I'm not sure what it means long-term in terms of pushback from communities.

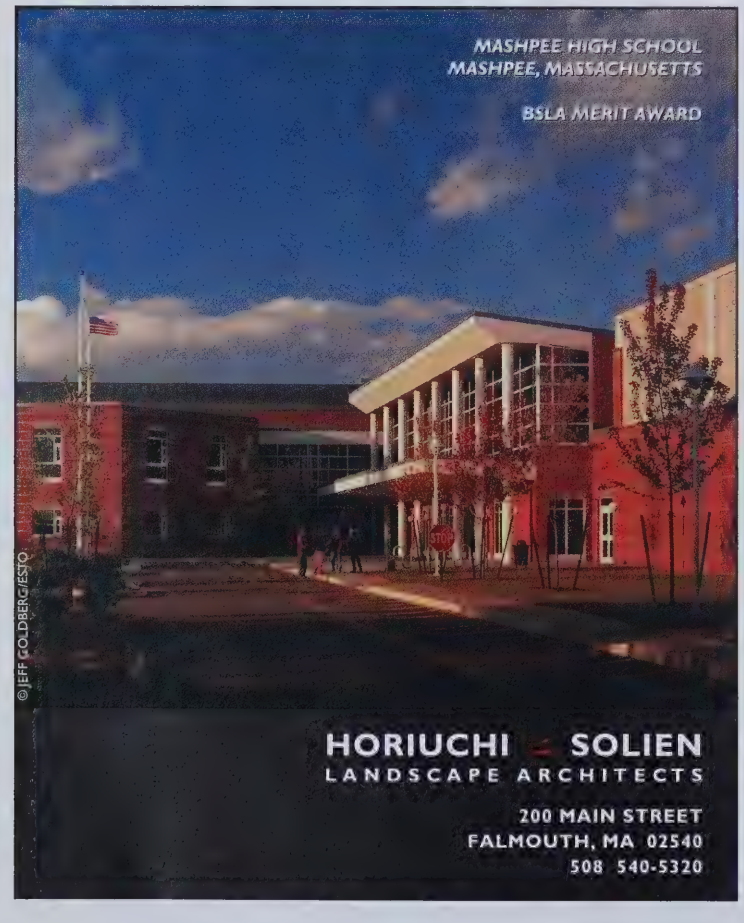
Elizabeth Padjen: And, of course, if East Boston begins to attract young residents who see it as a temporary waystation on their career paths rather than a place where they will put down roots, citizen participation will drop even more. We talked about factors that prevent East Boston from becoming another Atlantic City. Do you worry about the opposite extreme — gentrification? What might hold gentrification in check?

Madeleine Steczynski: One big advantage we have is that East Boston seems to be predominantly owner-occupied at this point, meaning there are three-family houses with the owner living in one unit and renting two, so the owners aren't often forced to move. As I understand it, many of the people who lived in the South End were renters and couldn't afford to stay.

But it's still a question: if 1,600 units of luxury waterfront housing are built in the next few years, what will that do to our community? Will we still have all the great little locally owned stores in Maverick Square that give our neighborhood its character? Or will the people who live on the waterfront demand completely different kinds of shops and services? Can they both coexist? I feel that we have an incredible opportunity to avoid gentrification while bettering our community. What comes with gentrification is a sort of whitewashing: no more character, just a wealthy place to live with nice shops and fancy food stores. But East Boston has the potential to have a beautiful waterfront with high-end housing, affordable housing, and everything in between, and still have little bodegas and shops and a very funky interior that's just as desirable and attractive as the waterfront.

Elizabeth Padjen: Saul, let's take advantage of your expertise in the real-estate market. People confide all sorts of things about their lives to brokers, so brokers know a lot about communities. What are you seeing in terms of what people are looking for and buying? Have you seen a shift over the time that you've been in the business?

Saul Perlera: We have a lot of people, mostly in their late 20s and early 30s, looking for condos. They're not looking for a multi-family; very few of them want to be landlords. They just want to move to a new place where things are happening. They think that they're going to see a moderate or even sizeable increase in value here. They want to be part of the change, and they want a nice place to live. They're usually young professionals who recently graduated from college and are starting their careers. Their incomes are generally between $35,000 and $65,000, enough to qualify for a two-bedroom condo between $200,000 and $350,000.



People think they can be involved through the Internet, but it's a very different dynamic from showing up at a community meeting and haranguing the elected officials. — Lowell Richards

Al Caldarelli: That's a very different profile from the people who we work with. My constituents are families with household incomes from $20,000 to $35,000, usually looking for two- or three-bedroom units because they have children. Other than the subsidized units, there's nothing we can do for them. And our waiting list is enormous.

Saul Perlera: We've lost a lot of people to Lynn, because they could get the same house there with parking, lots of space, in good condition, for $100,000 less than they had to pay in East Boston. It used to be that they needed only one working person to qualify to buy a house. Now they need the husband, the wife, and maybe even the brother to enable them to buy the house. They're still buying, but they need those combined incomes to get a mortgage.

Elizabeth Padjen: What's the highest price that's been paid for a property in the neighborhood?

Saul Perlera: $1,150,000 — for a former firehouse that had 3,800 square feet, a roof deck, and a garage. It was a great building, but we were all shocked. Nothing had ever sold for even half that amount in East Boston. But now you see sales at $500,000 or more; some condos at Porter 156 are selling in the high fives.

Mayor Menino was right on the button when he created programs to increase home ownership — he definitely achieved that in East Boston. I would say that a majority of the market here that took advantage was Latino. And still is. I've been here for 20 years, and I have seen every single change since the mid-'80s, when it was probably 95 percent Italian. It was a neat neighborhood. Now it's changing, and it's changing, I think, for the better. I'm excited about it. I never could justify paying the price to move downtown, without the quality of life that you could have in East Boston, especially if you feel that East Boston is your neighborhood. And I feel that it is my neighborhood. ■

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Reflections on the City

Photographs by Kwesi Budu Arthur

Window-shopping is surely one of the great pleasures of the city — goods and services offered on an endless cinematic scroll, entertaining pedestrians as they travel the paths of daily life. Amid growing protests against the rising tide of chain stores flooding downtowns lies the understanding that big-name retailers are washing away the remnants of local enterprise and local flavor — leaving behind a sanitized, bland rendition of neighborhood life. Commerce — trade, to be more precise — is a fundamental human impulse, and in every city, in every neighborhood, small, locally owned shops offer insights into the communities that support them.

Storefronts also offer visual delights in ways that their owners don't always anticipate. Photographer Kwesi Budu Arthur has developed a keen sensibility for the double exposures that they provide — at once revealing the objects within and reflecting the surrounding streetscape and passersby. His images, like dual-ply tissue paper, capture these two layers of understanding, compressing them into one abstraction. Stare at them a bit, and the layers become separate again.

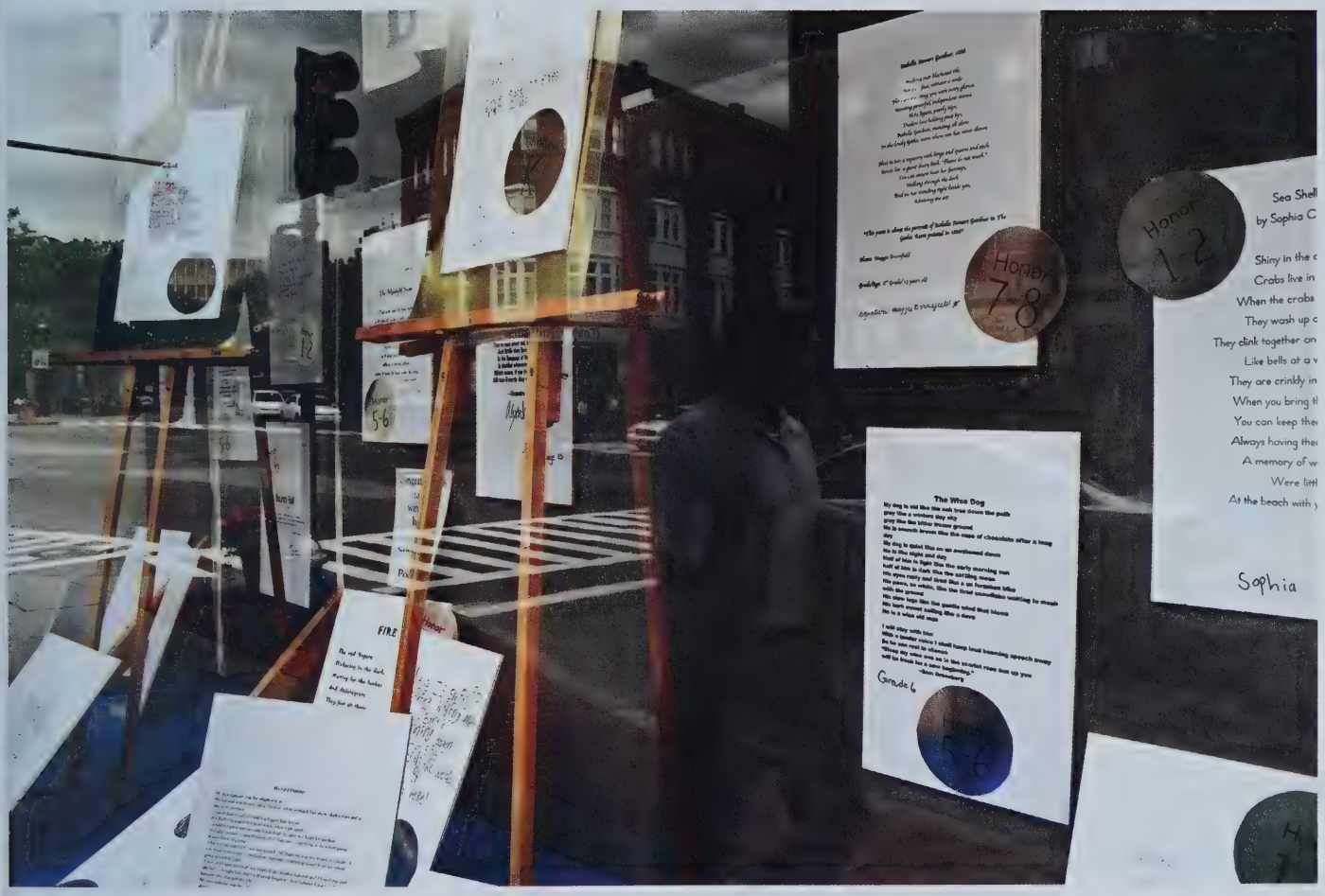
Arthur, a digital-imaging specialist at Cambridge Seven Associates, was born in Ghana, West Africa, in 1961, studied photography and economics at State University of New York at Albany, and has lived in the Boston area since 1985. In the ways that his storefront images reflect surrounding scenes, they call to mind the 19th-century craze for the camera obscura (literally, "dark room") — a small structure built in a scenic place to take advantage of the optical phenomenon by which an exterior view will be projected through a small hole onto the opposite interior wall. Camera obscura images are always upside-down (the addition of lenses and mirrors allowed them to be projected onto table tops); storefront reflections of course are inverted left-to-right. These small distortions, as viewers stand with their backs to the actual scene, offer a fresh understanding of a known condition — precisely Arthur's intention as he embarked on his reflections series in 2004 with the urge to rediscover the place he had called home for 20 years.

— Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA

Chelsea Street (Maverick Square), East Boston, 2006.

Blue Hill Avenue, Mattapan, 2004.

Hancock Street, North End, 2004.



Harvard Street, Brookline Village, 2004.

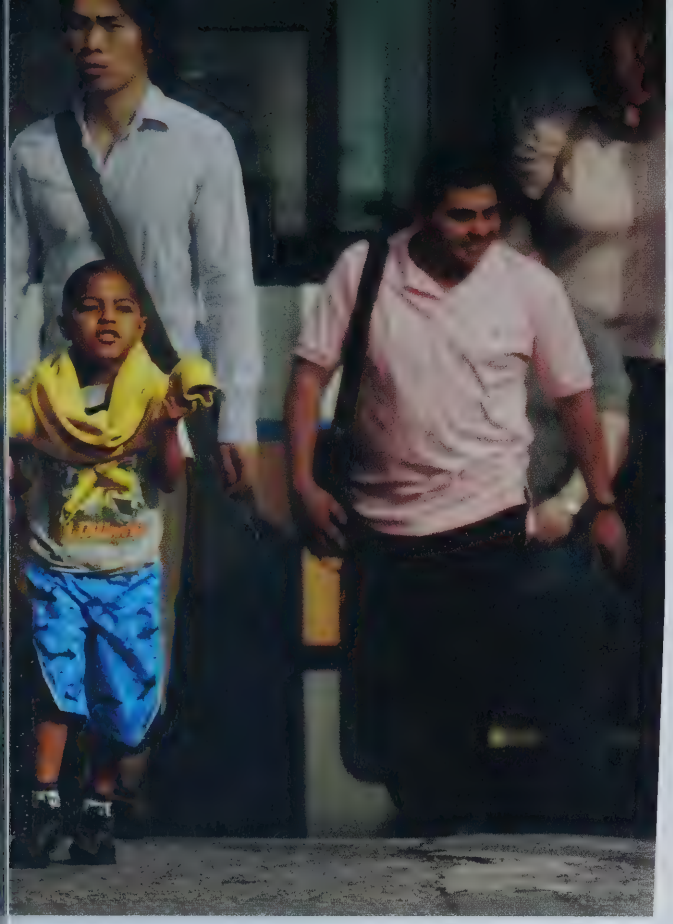
DESIGNING COMMUNITY

It takes a village to build a village

By David Dixon FAIA

The changing face of East Boston is the story of much of urban America. Change is not new to East Boston: waves of immigration from Ireland, Europe's Jewish ghettos, Italy, Latin America, and elsewhere washed over its neighborhoods and transformed their ethnic character again and again. But through each period of change, one constant remained: these were highly homogeneous neighborhoods in which people of similar backgrounds shared the same blocks, churches, parks, and Main Streets — and enjoyed neighborhoods that fostered a deep and enduring sense of community.

Like the rest of urban America, East Boston is now experiencing a new type of change: people from diverse racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds all share the same streets. The triple-deckers, churches, parks, and commercial squares that once made the neighborhood a symbol of urban community are still there. By themselves, however, these traditional forms represent only the body, not the soul, of community. Though East Boston's houses still look similar, the people who live in them may or may not worship in nearby churches, very often don't have kids (or dogs) to take to the



corner park, and do much of their shopping at Target or over the Internet.

This story has a very human face. I met Josie in the late 1970s. She taught at the Beacon Hill Nursery School, where my son "studied" in the Blue Room. She thought the Beacon Hill neighborhood was OK, but a little drab and nothing like East Boston, where she lived. She loved East Boston. The airport made far too much noise, and there were too many trucks. Yet, she said, she would never leave "Eastie." She knew and loved her neighbors, the shopkeepers, her priest, the local librarian, and the teachers in her daughter's school. When Josie called East Boston "beautiful," she was not referring to its Victorian houses, proud industrial buildings, or extensive waterfront. For Josie, East Boston's beauty lay in the way that it naturally connected residents to each other. It was, in other words, a community.

Josie never envisioned a world in which someone would offer to buy her house for several hundred dollars per square foot. She never imagined that someone would successfully convert a nearby lingerie factory to lofts. She never dreamed of hearing more Spanish than English (or Italian) in church. She couldn't picture an Eastie in which many of her neighbors would go to work at 8:00 A.M. and not 5:00 A.M., come home too late to chat on the street, and perhaps most surprising, an Eastie in which most of her new neighbors would have no kids. Welcome to East Boston today — Diversity, USA — and the joys and challenges of a world in which architects and planners need to work consciously to create community. Homogeneity once created community naturally. Diversity forces us to figure out new paths toward the same end.

The story of East Boston is being played out across urban America. Driving up Park Heights Avenue in Baltimore, a driver circles an elegant roundabout and comes into full view of an imposing synagogue marked by a handsome barrel vault. From a perch just below the vault, a grand Star of David, more than 12 feet across, greets all who arrive in Park Heights. For generations, the building and its star symbolized the close-knit sense of community as it welcomed people to Park Heights. Today, a small sign next to the stairs welcomes visitors to The Cornerstone Church of Christ, an evangelical Baptist Church. On the east side of Los Angeles, this same driver might pass Highland Park, filled with Mexican-American families enjoying a sunny weekend day. Yet, directly across the street, trendy new offices and expensively renovated bungalows tell the story of dramatic social change.

For more than a century, America had a "mass market" approach to housing. Until World War II, developers built one-size-fits-all neighborhoods for a growing urban workforce made up of immigrants from around the world. After the war, suburban detached housing became the standard model. More recently, "baby boomer" households, most including kids, shaped the market. In the late 1990s, however, shifting demographics pointed the country in a new direction, one in which no single group dominates the housing market; America has become, in the words of the Urban Land Institute, "a nation of niches." Younger, older, and childless households now control a much greater share of housing dollars, and many of these "niche" markets are sinking their dollars into urban neighborhoods. Rising frustration with long commutes has reinforced this trend. During the 1990s, hours

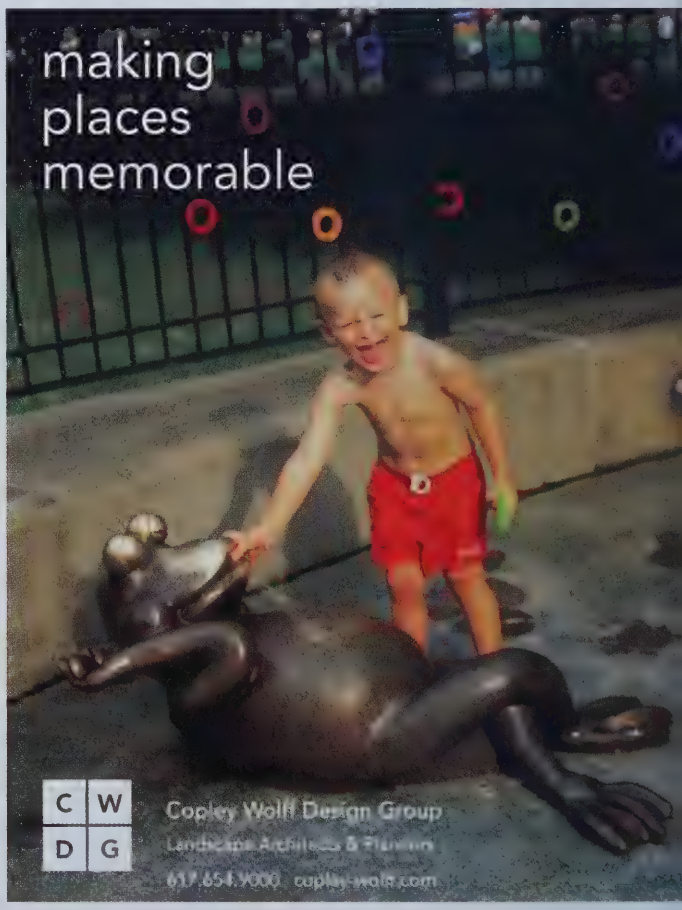
We need to add a new generation of civic infrastructure — densities, programs, and policies — that enriches people's lives with a renewed sense of community.

lost to traffic congestion increased by more than 50 percent in the Boston region, a pattern reflected across the country. Last year, *The Boston Globe* reported that 79 percent of respondents in a national poll indicated that "a shorter commute would be a primary factor in choosing their next house." Last May, *Parade* magazine reported that homebuyers were increasingly choosing a shorter commute over more square footage when buying a new home.

Is this interest in urban neighborhoods a bubble? *The Wall Street Journal* thinks not. It reported last October that "for many, an urban condo is now more luxurious than a…yard" and predicted that the trend is here to stay. *USA Today* reported last April that cities are reclaiming greater shares of regional wealth with the revival of interest in urban neighborhoods.

As housing markets have rediscovered urban neighborhoods, developers, planners, and architects have rediscovered townhouses and other building forms that promote walking and human interaction — and that historically constituted the "civic infrastructure" of community. Yet, as New Urbanist Andres Duany often says, "you can't have a townhouse without a town." We need to add a new generation of civic infrastructure — densities, programs, and policies — that enriches people's lives with a renewed sense of community.

In my experience, nothing strikes a deeper, or more telling, chord in public meetings than the desire for a nearby walkable Main Street. The neighborhood stores, coffee shops (now often a Starbucks), and pubs on countless Main Streets across urban America represent a sort of neighborhood living room where people can come together without a formal invitation. Goody Clancy undertook a study a few years ago with Pam McKinney, a nationally respected real-estate economist, to determine how many new housing units are required to support a single block of new Main Street retail. The answer turned out to be 1,000 to 2,000 units within a 10- to-15-minute walk. American cities did not require such densities when urban neighborhoods were first built, because earlier generations of residents spent a much greater share of disposable income at local stores. Those days are gone. To support the desire for healthy, vital Main Streets today — in both new and old communities — we need to find housing models that



can sustain the required densities. Some models already exist: Tent City in Boston's South End; industrial buildings redeveloped into lofts in East Boston; and the redevelopment of single-story retail sites into mixed-use buildings, with ground-floor retail and housing above, along Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge. These are the new paradigms of density that can support walkable urban Main Streets for a new generation.

Vibrant Main Streets by themselves, however, are not enough. We need new programs that take on the roles that church suppers, school fairs, and fraternal-organization lunches once played. Across America, neighborhood residents themselves have great ideas about how to "program" their neighborhoods to build a sense of community. In cities as different as Miami and Cincinnati, people offer the same simple — and compelling — ideas about adding activities to local parks that invite people of diverse ages, races, and incomes to come together: splash fountains that draw kids of all ages on hot days; sports leagues for people with disabilities; neighborhood interpretive programs that tell the stories of past and present residents.

Faced with the daunting task of not only rebuilding their neighborhoods, but also resurrecting a sense of community, local leaders in New Orleans see their schools and libraries as places that can build on the concept of lifetime-learning to take on the role of traditional community centers for 21st-century New Orleans. In Columbus, Ohio, residents of one of the city's poorest — and now fastest changing — neighborhoods have expressed interest in creating a residential version of business improvement districts, whose paid managers are helping to enliven Main Streets across America, as a way to organize neighborhood festivals and other activities that will bring the neighborhood's newly diverse residents together.

Even if we succeed in rebuilding community at a neighborhood scale, we will lose at a larger scale if we allow dramatically shifting housing demand to price long-time residents out of urban neighborhoods. Decades of experience suggest that the answer does not lie in rent control. Instead, Boston and other cities must tap the extraordinary new wealth flowing into their neighborhoods — wealth that has more than doubled the assessed value of real estate in Boston over the past decade — to invest in creating mixed-income neighborhoods. There is no effective way to prevent housing values from rising, but we can move aggressively to finance and build mixed-income housing, expand inclusionary zoning, provide real-estate tax relief for lower-income residents, and take other steps that will create opportunities for a wide spectrum of Americans to enjoy renewed community.

Accepting diversity does not always come easily in America. East Boston is a living symbol of one success story. Long-time residents have supported proposals for more than 1,600 new "luxury" housing units in recent years and welcomed an influx of new Latino worshipers into their churches. But accepting diversity is the first challenge; recreating the same rich sense of community that enriched lives in homogeneous neighborhoods is the next. ■

David Dixon FAIA is an urban designer and principal at Goody Clancy in Boston. He chairs the AIA Regional and Urban Design Committee.

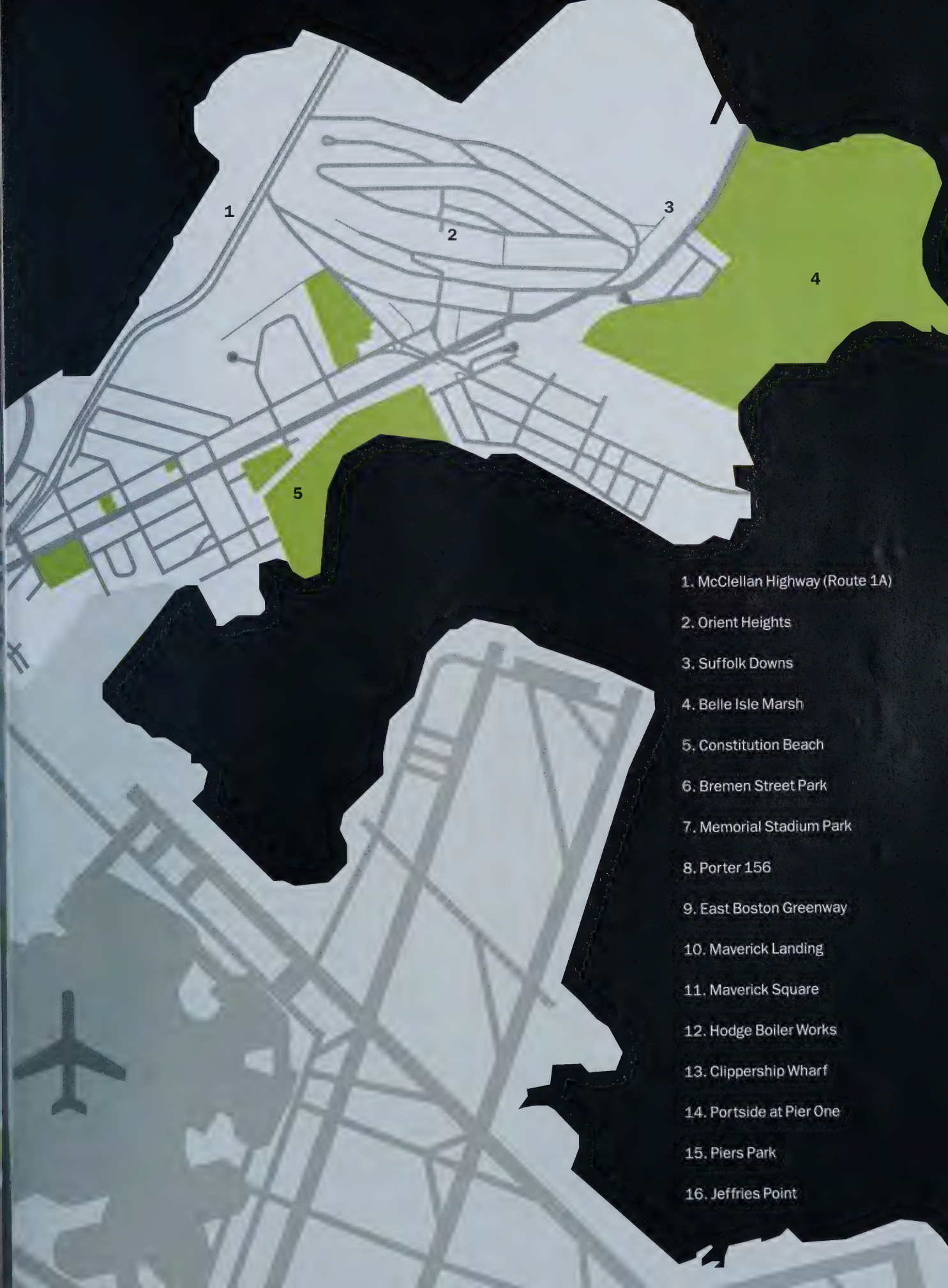
Mitigating Circumstances

Residents of East Boston have become skilled practitioners of the art of negotiation By Anthony Flint

Perhaps more than any other community in Massachusetts, East Boston is the place that mitigation built.

For most of the 20th century, the residents of East Boston — predominantly immigrant groups and working families of modest means — have had to put up with an expanded Logan International Airport, an industrial waterfront along Chelsea Creek, tank farms, a predominantly above-ground rapid transit line, state roadways, a major harbor crossing in the form of the Sumner and Callahan tunnels and, since 1992, the Ted Williams Tunnel and related Big Dig roadway configurations. Traffic, pollution, noise, landtakings, and the destruction of open space were all the now-infamous hallmarks of Logan Airport. Pollution from the tailpipes of cars and buses queuing up for the tunnels hung over urban neighborhoods, the damaging effects of which, in terms of particulates and asthma rates, are only now being understood. The Big Dig turned East Boston into a construction site for years.

Ever since the late Jane Jacobs started blocking highways in the 1960s, the only way megaprojects could coexist with a residential



1. McClellan Highway (Route 1A)
2. Orient Heights
3. Suffolk Downs
4. Belle Isle Marsh
5. Constitution Beach
6. Bremen Street Park
7. Memorial Stadium Park
8. Porter 156
9. East Boston Greenway
10. Maverick Landing
11. Maverick Square
12. Hodge Boiler Works
13. Clippership Wharf
14. Portside at Pier One
15. Piers Park
16. Jeffries Point

The critical turning point was the 1968 destruction of Wood Island Park, the greensward designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, to make way for runway expansion.

community was to soften — or mitigate — all the hardships and inconveniences and negative impacts. Over time, mitigation became a two-pronged strategy: minimize the harm — the noise and the pollution from jets, for example — and provide benefits that make up for the harm. The latter has shaped the public realm in East Boston. Mitigation has become the vehicle for delivering parks and infrastructure that used to be a more fundamental public-sector responsibility.

But while East Boston has become one of the leading models for mitigation in the country — along with other communities wrestling with transportation infrastructure, such as neighborhoods in Chicago and Atlanta — it's been a long and winding road. The process has been erratic and imperfect, and checkered by unfulfilled promises and legal and political wrangling that cloud a sense of coherent long-range planning.

"I'm not sure I would even call much of this mitigation," says Fred Salvucci, an East Boston native and former state secretary of transportation, who is now a professor at MIT. "I would call it a series of hard negotiations in a protracted conflict."

The mitigation era manifested in East Boston in many different ways, but most longtime residents identify the critical turning point as the 1968 destruction of Wood Island Park, the greensward designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, to make way for runway expansion. With open space already at a premium, the loss was made more painful by the heavy-handed process — a treasured allée of elm trees was chainsawed without notice. As residents who came to be known as the Maverick Street mothers staged sit-ins to protest truck routes, the chained-to-a-bulldozer community activism that East Boston is famous for was born. The message was clear: economic development would no longer ride roughshod over the community.

Pushed by the state, Massport and Logan set emissions and idling time limits and launched other environmentally sensitive initiatives such as electric baggage carts. The airport paid for the soundproofing of hundreds of homes.

The airport battles were only the beginning of the mitigation story, as activists turned to the matter of roadway infrastructure. Ultimately, the portal of the third harbor tunnel crossing (the Ted Williams Tunnel) was moved from the Orient Heights section to a site within the airport perimeter. The fight over the harbor crossing, following the runway expansion, prompted Mayor Kevin White to push for greater involvement by City Hall in Massport plans, urging better choices and promoting a parks strategy.

A central idea, says Salvucci, was to use parks as a buffer between the airport and the community, bolstered by a 1964 law that also made it difficult to destroy parks for transportation uses. But greenspace would serve another important function. A hundred years ago, the green and residential areas were in the north and eastern sections of East Boston, and the hard industrial edge was along the southern and western edge and the waterfront. By the 1960s and '70s, the airport dominated the former and the latter had decayed, with warehouses and other structures routinely catching fire. A mitigation-driven open-space plan addressed strategic pieces of this new reality. Parts of Chelsea Creek, essentially an industrial sewer, were cleaned up. The Mario Umana school complex rose up on former shipyard property along Border Street. Massport built a park near elderly housing in Maverick Square. The city purchased a junkyard and turned it into Porzio Park. Massport created the Harborwalk around Jeffries Park cove, and when the airport Hyatt hotel was built, the adjacent edge was turned into walking and jogging paths connected to Jeffries Point. Belle Isle Marsh, the salt marsh south of Beachmont Hill in Revere, once the site of a drive-in theater and under consideration as a storage site for aviation fuel, became a state-run nature preserve.

More recently, the Big Dig became another mitigation engine for East Boston. The roadways leading to the Sumner, Callahan, and Ted Williams tunnels, as well as to a reconfigured internal airport roadway system, became an intricate puzzle that spun off several benefits for the public realm. Access to the East Boston Memorial Stadium Park, itself an earlier product of Massport mitigation, was improved with a new connection to the Cottage Street/Jeffries Point neighborhood. And the Big Dig's re-alignment of roadways along the CSX rail rights-of-way — after years of legal wrangling involving a park-and-fly proposal — ultimately resulted in the Bremen Street linear park and the East Boston Greenway.

Rick Dimino, former transportation commissioner for the City of Boston, longtime East Boston community advocate, and now head of A Better City (formerly the Artery Business Committee), says the Bremen Street Park will be a centerpiece in its own right, particularly with the joint effort by the city, state,

As residents who came to be known as the Maverick Street mothers staged sit-ins to protest truck routes, the chained-to-a-bulldozer community activism that East Boston is famous for was born.

and Massachusetts Turnpike Authority to convert an old boxspring factory to a YMCA community center. But Bremen Street is also a "crucial link," Dimino says, in a vision for a series of greenspaces from the harbor parks to the salt marshes at the airport's edge and Belle Isle Marsh.

"This is a place where the regional transportation hub and the residential neighborhood face day-to-day challenges that are perhaps unique in the country," Dimino says. The Bremen Street Park is a leading example of how those two elements, otherwise at odds, produced something that has improved the daily lives of residents.

Dimino also cites Piers Park, the Harborwalk, award-winning ventilation building designs, the expansion of the parking freeze to include all of East Boston (to address concerns about increased traffic due to the improved roadway access in the area), as well as neighborhood access improvements that were built into the new airport station on the Blue Line constructed by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.

The mitigation saga in East Boston is a vivid illustration of how community sensitivity has been built into government and development processes, says David Luberoff, co-author, with Harvard Graduate School of Design dean Alan Altshuler, of the book *Megaprojects*. That sensitivity has increased the cost of doing business, Luberoff says. But it's based on two themes: "One, stop hurting people. And two, how can we at least make you whole."

Today, airports are buying noise easement rights over "noise sheds" in residential neighborhoods. In some places, the themes of mitigation have carried on even after the airport has gone away. At Denver's Stapleton airport, which closed after the new Denver International Airport opened, the developer Forest City is making open space and parks available to abutting neighbors, to smooth the process of transforming that airfield to a new neighborhood.

"There is a sense, whether in Atlanta or Chicago at O'Hare, that the airport is a major economic engine, and those communities negatively affected should get some of the positive economic development," says Luberoff.

Cities such as Cleveland have actually put questions of expansion and mitigation directly to voters. "They said, here are the impacts, and here are the goodies," Luberoff says. But in this area, he says, "We seem to go at it backwards — who can make the most compelling case, what will work. The process gives a leg up to well-financed and tactically savvy groups. But I'm not sure we ever had a real chance to go to East Boston and say, yes or no? Is this worth it? Parks or schools?"

Even if a crazy quilt of benefits has arrived through tortuous means, residents in East Boston continue to see the fruits of mitigation appear almost on a daily basis. Thanks to a rainy spring, the grass at Bremen Street Park, in contrast to the concrete trestles of Big Dig roadways, is vibrant and green. ■

Anthony Flint is public affairs manager at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, a think-tank based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He is the author of *This Land: The Battle Over Sprawl and the Future of America* (Johns Hopkins University Press).

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Who Is East Boston?

Greg Luongo AIA and Tacey Luongo AIA talk with their neighbors

Greg Luongo AIA, a lifelong resident of East Boston, is an associate principal at Tsoi/Kobus & Associates in Cambridge. **Tacey Luongo AIA** is the principal of Renny Corporation, an East Boston development company. Her renovation projects, including their own East Boston home, have been featured in *The Boston Globe* and several design publications. They can be contacted at gluongo@tka-architects.com and at rennycorp@comcast.net.

It used to be, whenever we'd tell people we lived in East Boston, the response was invariably, "Where's that?", or "I've never been there." Mention Logan Airport or Santarpio's Pizza, and we might get a nod of vague recognition.

If, as the popular local slogan says, "East Boston Is Not an Airport" and East Boston is not "EaBo," as was recently suggested by a real-estate marketer, then *who* and *what* is East Boston?

This thriving section of the City of Boston, with a population of 39,000, is enjoying a surge of appreciation for its many urban offerings. East Boston is in a unique position of strength to respond to new development plans and infrastructure proposals, a strength that comes from being a culturally and economically diverse group of neighbors. Newcomers and lifelong residents alike share a sense of home, community, and belonging. This sense of connection imparts a strength that enables East Bostonians to respect and welcome change, and to work together to gracefully guide it into the future.

East Boston has always offered a home to immigrants. Its history has seen waves of hardworking, opportunity-seeking refugees from many cultures, and each has contributed to the strength that remains in place for the current newcomers, who discover a vital, bustling haven of acceptance and opportunity.

Who is East Boston? The East Bostonians interviewed here are a diverse sampling of characters, representing the remarkable mix of people living in this neighborhood. Each one remains here by choice. Their roots deepen daily, and their positive outlooks support the spirit that is palpable in East Boston today.

Todd Fairchild, 36, an artist and graphic designer, grew up in an Amherst, Massachusetts housing project, and has lived in many Greater Boston neighborhoods. Todd is active with EBAG (East Boston Artists Group). He met his partner, John Antonellis, just after John had bought and renovated a two-family house in the Eagle Hill area of East Boston.

Working out of his home has exposed Todd to the daytime activities and rhythms of the neighborhood: "It reminds me of Brooklyn, in a way. East Boston is isolated from the nine-to-five ebb and flow; the immigrant community works 24 hours a day, there's no student flux, no mass exodus in the spring and return in the fall. So it has a rhythm that's very different from other towns."

The cultural diversity of Eastie is a big attraction: "I definitely feel at home. I feel integrated. I feel energized as well. I like the clash of what the new immigrants bring to it, the variety of independent entities living side by side. I joke that in the summertime, there is a taste of island living here. There's old and new, there's young and old — a nice mix."

As a gay male, he has been harassed in other towns but is comfortable in Eastie: "Living in East Boston is probably the first time I've felt that I belong, on every level. We feel really lucky that we're in the right place in our home, our relationship, and our neighborhood. We have casual drop-in friends nearby who we have dinner with on a regular basis. I'm involved with some community groups. It has a big impact in such a dense neighborhood."

Growing up in subsidized housing, he often observed that tenants could never feel that they owned anything, nor did they feel responsible for maintaining anything for the long term. Eastie's economic diversity and high rate of home ownership are different: "I feel there is a real benefit to a mix of incomes, to have peer pressure to keep up your home."

"I don't think I've scratched the surface of East Boston. I live in a place that I am proud to call home, without apology. I feel like I've been fed sustenance since I've been here."

Diane Modica, 59, a granddaughter of Sicilian immigrants, was born and raised in East Boston. Her mother ironed draperies for Filene's, and her father was a longshoreman and bar owner. An attorney practicing in downtown Boston, she is politically active and is a former city councilor. She owns a house in Jeffries Point, which has been in her family for over 75 years, and recently converted it from a three-family to a two-family with a roof deck.

She remembers a very different waterfront: "Marginal Street was where the longshoremen would line up in the morning for the 'pick-up.' There was a wall that ran the whole length, and the foreman would stand on top of the wall and start calling for the gang that was going to work the ships that morning. You could hear all the names being called, Irish and Italian. My grandfather was a watchman — watching to make sure that no one stole any cargo from the ships. Those were the days before containerization, so the cargo was all taken off the hold of the ships by hand, by a winch. It was a pretty risky business for a lot of the guys — if that winch ever let go, and you were down in the hold, you could be a dead man. It was always about the waterfront. We played as kids down there on the waterfront. Even when I was a teenager, when I was in the local CYO [Catholic Youth Organization] Drum and Bugle Corps, we would have our practices down there. Horns and drums would be blaring and beating and you'd be doing your routines on the waterfront. I don't think there's a day gone by that I haven't looked at water."

With the proposed development, she knows the waterfront is changing yet again: "I just want to see the waterfront optimally used, and in a manner from which we can all benefit from the beauty. The waterfront was, for a very long time, a working waterfront, all about jobs. No one knew about condos on the waterfront, having drinks on the balcony. We'll see people with more money moving in — they find East Boston attractive, probably for all the reasons that I do."

The embarrassing state of the MBTA Blue Line stations is a continuing annoyance: "The Blue Line looks like a war zone. I love Aquarium Station. I love Airport Station. We should have had that at Maverick years ago. I've never seen so many people use Maverick as in the last five, six years. No fear coming home late at night because you've got people all around you. The T hasn't really acknowledged that East Boston is not a nine-to-five community. Their schedules are still dealing with a nine-to-five workday. Maverick is a big issue every day of my life. That's why I can't wait for the ferry service to return."

"I must have some sort of primal connection to East Boston. Some people are searching their entire lives for a comfort level. I guess I found it early here."

Carlos Pemberthy, 19, a budding recording artist and greenspace activist, came here from Colombia seven years ago with his parents and younger brother when an uncle offered his home until they found jobs. They are in the process of obtaining permanent resident status. Everyone in his family has different fluencies in English, and his mother is taking English classes.

Zumix, a youth group organization focusing on performance art, broadcasting, and music: "Zumix came to our school — I filled out an application and a couple months later, I was in the program. They teach songwriting skills, computer skills, software, and they have the equipment for professional recording. I can schedule sessions with their engineer."

"Sometimes people are maybe intolerant of other people's cultures. But I feel like it is a matter of time. We have the Italian festival. You don't only see Italians going to the festival, you see everybody going to it."

Carlos interns part time at NOAH (Neighborhood of Affordable Housing), a community development corporation: "Basically, the work I do is related to environmental justice. We need to develop green space for the community, like the [Chelsea Creek] Urban Wild. The youth group I belong to takes care of the park — maintenance, making sure the water quality levels are good. We've also done some fill studies. We did brochures and we also do monthly events at the Urban Wild to get the community involved, so we go out flyering. I feel integrated into the community because of the work I do. I'm always going to community meetings. Not that I feel discriminated against, but you feel a little bit of tension being a young person, especially with the police. I got pulled over not even a month ago, so the officer asked me who I worked for. I told him NOAH and community projects and stuff like that, and he thought I was joking around. Just because I'm young doesn't mean that I'm not going to be involved with my community."

Carlos is working on an album and has been active with

Carlos acknowledges that there is some youth gang activity: "Most of the youth places close around six. Some kids don't go home and they're more likely to get in trouble. There are good community groups here for youth, but if they don't go out there and try to recruit the kids to do the right things, someone else is going to come and recruit them to the wrong stuff, you know what I'm saying? You need to target the older people that are recruiting the young kids. I think the problem has decreased a lot because the police are getting tougher. I do feel safe. There's always people just randomly acting stupid."

Thinking about assimilation of immigrants into East Boston, Carlos says: "Anybody that comes here, they're thinking of the American Dream — they'll be here for just a couple of years, they'll make some money, and go back. But that never happens. People end up staying. Right now you see people establishing their lives here, starting a little business, buying houses. If you're here since you were young, you don't remember the culture you came from."

Elizabeth and Jim Gagnon bought a three-family fixer-upper in Jefferies Point three years ago after renting in Jamaica Plain for eight years. Elizabeth, 38, is a psychologist in private practice in downtown Boston. Jim, 32, is a property manager for a large Somerville real-estate company, as well as a jazz musician/vocalist.

Their quest for an affordable house brought them to East Boston, after combing Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, and Dorchester. Elizabeth: "The first time we drove into East Boston and drove up Webster Street, we were enchanted — it was 'neighborhoody.' I will never forget that summer night. Everybody was outside, and I was overwhelmed with this really great feeling." Jim agrees: "Somehow we found our way over to Piers Park. The ice-cream truck drove by, and people were pouring out of the park. It was a pretty cool scene. It felt like it was an amazing discovery."

Elizabeth notes that their initial sense of community has deepened: "My car was parked almost two blocks away, and my elderly Italian neighbor knew I had a flat tire. Even though he doesn't speak English, he came to tell me about it. Everybody knows what's going on. There was an incident where somebody's window was broken at three or four in the morning. The entire neighborhood came out, trying to help, and stayed there the whole night to make sure it was safe. On another occasion, we had a power outage, and it turned into a block party."

"I am hopeful that the amount of homeownership that's already in place in East Boston will help buffer it against becoming super-gentrified. A diverse community is what makes it the richest."

The Gagnons notice an influx of young professionals; their own tenants are in their 20s: "They were really attracted by the mix of ethnicities and the different restaurants and the city feel. The local restaurant scene is very authentic. After living here for a while, I went to the Border Café, and I thought, why would I ever eat here again? This is so not the real thing compared to what I'm used to now."

Mary Ellen Welch is a devoted guardian of the quality of life in East Boston. She teaches second grade at Hugh Rowe O'Donnell School and is a founder and now president of Neighborhood of Affordable Housing (NOAH). A seventh-generation descendent of Irish immigrants, she has always lived in "the First Section," as it was once known, on Webster Street in Jeffries Point.

NOAH takes multiple approaches to the housing problem: "All the CDCs are trying very hard to create affordable housing opportunities. It doesn't always mean buying or building new buildings, although NOAH is doing two construction projects now. It's also having opportunities like a loan program by the city, especially for people who traditional lending institutions might not want to help. It's building a financial literacy component — teaching people how to save, how to pay off their credit debt, and offering first-time homebuyer classes. It's getting grants to lower or dismiss completely the closing costs. It's a senior home-repair program, which helps seniors stay in their houses. Homeownership is really key to stability in a community. You take pride in your house, your street, your block, and that fuels camaraderie and it fuels self-respect."

NOAH's programs extend beyond housing: "The Community Organizing Program at NOAH teaches people, who might have Spanish as a first language, how to get involved in the political process and in civic issues like clean streets, for instance. Some of them come from countries where they would be killed for doing exactly what we try to do. And some of them are here for that reason — they're not all here for economic benefits. Some of them are here to stay alive. The lives of people are more than just the house."

Transportation is a continuing challenge: "We could be looked upon as a transportation crossroads, but we're actually an island that connects to the core city. The quality of air is very poor, whether it's from the planes or from all of the traffic. And when the new waterfront developments come in, that's going to be 2,000 more people using the tunnels. If we're lucky, they'll only have one car each, but that's a dream. The developers downsize their expectations about the number of cars; one of them said a lot of people are going to come by bike. It was just so laughable. We've been on the back burner with the T for so long that I think they forget where we are. They proposed to redevelop Maverick Station 20 years ago. The Orient Heights T stop is awful. The Blue Line has been inaccessible — you have to help handicapped people at Orient Heights, and the last time they repaired the escalator at Maverick, anyone who was handicapped had to go to Wood Island Park and then get bused back to Maverick. It's really insulting, and the attitude of the T has been abominable. We've always had a psychological feeling that East Boston people are stepchildren of the city because we're separated by the harbor. They just don't think that we're important enough to service. Blue Line, blue-collar line."

"The soul of East Boston is its people. When new people come here, they don't find antagonism, because there is always a group of people working to create an atmosphere that is nurturing and open. And, yes, there are things to get done, a lot of things to fix. But there's an aliveness about this neighborhood that makes a difference."

Affordable housing is a continuing challenge: "It makes the community stronger and much more rich to have new people coming here all the time. This community should be accessible to everyone who wants to live here, and no one should be excluded because they don't have enough money. I am very wary of what has happened in the North End and Charlestown and parts of South Boston, where people who are working-class or poor or have lived there for a long time can no longer afford to live there. In the '80s, unscrupulous people bought investment properties here and didn't fix them up, and the quality of the housing stock went down. That was an opening for NOAH to buy property at a cheaper price and renovate it. East Boston CDC [Community Development Corporation] does the same. Developers want to put in upscale housing — market-rate rents and condos too small for families — so it's sort of a squeeze play. A house on my street just sold for a million dollars."

José Callejas, 39, left El Salvador in 1981 for Houston, arriving in the Boston area in 1989 and eventually settling in East Boston with his (then) wife, Maria, and three children. He owns Mi Pueblito, a Mexican/Salvadoran restaurant on Border Street near Central Square, a triple-decker home in Jefferies Point, and an investment property on Chelsea Street. He and Maria opened Rosticería Cancún in Maverick Square in 1993. After their divorce, Maria opened another restaurant, Taquería Cancún, José's sister-in-law bought Rosticería Cancún, and José established Mi Pueblito. His children all are attending or have graduated from Catholic schools outside East Boston.

José has seen change in his neighborhood: "We were the first to start selling Mexican food here, and now we have a lot of customers. I'm running this one, Maria's running that one, and we do real good. The people from El Salvador keep growing their businesses — they're hardworking people. They've got two jobs so they've got money to spend. The new generation maybe thinks different."

José eagerly anticipates the new development: "I understand old people don't want anything new here. I understand that. They believe it's going to bring more people and different people, going to change East Boston. But we need changes here, in a good way, not in a bad way. More investment is going to help things. That's why I'm fixing the fence and the garden, and last year I fixed all the apartments. I want to do condos; it's a good opportunity."

East Boston offers opportunity to immigrants: "These people who have come here already, they're hungry for a better life. When you open a business and you've got your small savings, and you see your business growing, you're very happy. You're going to see these people smiling all the time. You've got a reason to smile because you see a difference, and you never believed in your old country you could do this. You never believed you could have $100,000 in your hand. I tell my kids I never believed that, that I was going to try to make $40,000 and go back to El Salvador. But I stayed, because I believe that your home is your wife and your kids, and you need to take care of them. You've got a reason to stay."

"You don't need to go back to your country when you've got your family here."

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Assunta Luongo, 78 (center, with her sisters Antonietta Baldassare and Nina Contrada), is an energetic, retired widow, whose life centers on her family and church. She knows everyone in her neighborhood, volunteers at the Don Orione Nursing Home, brings Holy Communion to the house-bound, and sings in the choir. Every inch of her tiny yard in Orient Heights produces roses and tomatoes.

She came to East Boston from Montefalcione, Italy, in 1950, an orphan sponsored by two aunts already living here: "America opened the door for us. We were seven children with no parents, so we grew up by ourselves. It was very hard, but we were happy here."

She never learned to drive, as everything was close at hand — her work as a stitcher was a block away, her church is three doors away, and her three sons all went to East Boston schools: "I live near everything, so what else do I want? I live right near the MBTA station and the bus and so it's very convenient. That's East Boston for me."

Affordable housing gave the family stability: "In the '50s the rents were very, very low. We paid $27 a month for four rooms." She was finally able to save up money to buy the building from her landlady, providing the landlady could stay there rent-free for the rest of her life ("she lived a long time"). For many years, it was three Luongo households in the three-family building; the mailman finally gave up sorting the mail. Today she rents out two units of the triple-decker.

She welcomes newcomers, including new immigrants: "I came across, the others came across, too. I'm happy to see change."

"I am very happy with the way I am and the way the community is; I know everybody, and they all love me. East Boston is very good to me and I will never leave it. God bless America."

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Ralph Vertuccio, 62 (above, with his sister Linda), is the owner of Vertuccio Funeral Home. The grandson of Italian immigrants, he is the owner of the 160-year-old historic Eagle Hill home of the legendary shipbuilder, Donald McKay; he has lived in the house since the age of seven.

The house was central to his own family history: "My parents had the Friendly Auto School business from the '50s until about 1968, and my mother became friendly with all of the people who would sign up for lessons. They all became friends of the family and we always had a house full of company. They rented out the first floor of the big house, so we used to take that over for parties, and my mother did all of the cooking. Linda, my sister, married the boy downstairs."

His involvement in the community started young, with a tight circle of lifelong friends: "In this house, we founded the East Boston Historical Commission. Mike Laurano was very diligent in obtaining the history of old East Boston from the early 1800s to the 1970s and '80s, compiling it, giving slide shows. We were active in politics, too, as young men just approaching 21. We were all elected to the Democratic Ward Committee."

Politics colored life in East Boston: "East Boston had such a brilliant history back in the time of John F. Kennedy's grandfather,

"I've never moved, I've never gone anywhere. It's so hard for me to leave here, I love this house. I belong to another era. I do."

Honey Fitz. Politics was how you got things done, so you became active in politics. That's how you secured power, and you placed all of your friends and all of your family in jobs, in positions where they could help each other. It's very different now, not nearly as interesting. And the youth of today have virtually no interest in that stuff. They wouldn't form campaigns the way we did as kids. As teenagers we worked for politicians, writing envelopes, stuffing envelopes, putting up signs. I don't think you'd find that anywhere now. Of course, everything was redistricted, so politics doesn't have that real local flavor that it once had — somebody from the North End could be running to represent you here in East Boston. You don't know them, so you don't have the passion." ■

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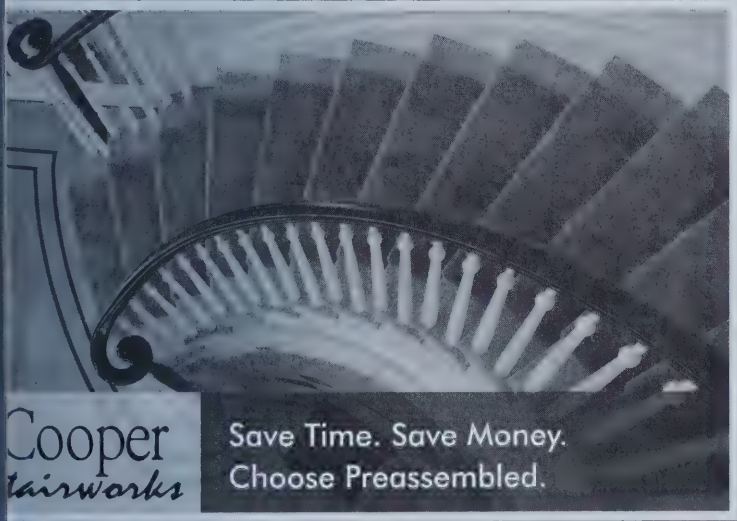

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Covering the Issues

It's never too late... Did you miss the *Newsweek* "Design 2006" issue? Though the print version hit newsstands sometime in June, its content is still available online. In this annual issue, the editors identify designers, ideas, and trends to watch. Most interesting is the "Web Design Dozen." More than merely "defining cool" (as it's billed), these 12 websites offer a captivating snapshot of American design life today. Most are blogs, typically including news, reviews, how-to's, photos, links to other sites, and interactive discussion. With names like *design*sponge*, *Shelterrific*, and *Apartment Therapy*, it's Martha Stewart for the masses — and more. *Apartment Therapy*, for example, aims to "make apartments better places to live," while *TreeHugger* seems to be the sustainability mothership for an environmentally responsible modern aesthetic. The immediacy and the volume of info are stunning. Go to www.newsweek.com and start clicking away.

There she goes again... Speaking of Stewart, she's launched a new magazine. With a title like ***Blueprint***, can any architect resist? OK — maybe outraged devotees of the original *Blueprint*, the respected UK mag. If the inaugural (Summer 2006) issue is any indication, you should, too. "Are you ready to design your life?" asks editor Rebecca Thuss in her opening letter. Which sounds great until she describes the inspiration for this endeavor in moments such as "when you find a great recipe for a flourless chocolate cake and need to share it with eight friends" immediately. The features are similarly superficial and contrived, like lost offspring of *Martha Stewart Living*. Though over the top, what makes *Living* tolerable (and terrific) is its substance. The potential of Martha for the whole home is great. This isn't.

More spin-offs...*Business Week* has also launched a new design endeavor. ***In: Inside Innovation***, a quarterly insert in the regular weekly print magazine, is "devoted to helping companies use 'design thinking'" to innovate, which the editors call the "single most important business challenge of our era." Architecture is explicitly included. The first issue (June 19, 2006) presents people and best practices from several fields, such as Patrick Whitey, director of the Institute of Design at Illinois Institute of Technology, who has revamped the school's traditional studio-based curriculum. *Business Week Online* presents extensive related content, including weekly podcasts that you can load onto your iPod, or listen to on your plain old PC.

Be prepared (but not too prepared)... What makes us vulnerable? ask the editors of ***Discover*** in "The Future of Terrorism" (July 2006). With balanced reporting and a measured tone that doesn't incite fear, they offer a comprehensive look at the various forms a terrorist attack might take: bioterror; engineered infections; nuclear threats; and chemical explosions in addition to all-too-familiar explosive devices. What does this mean for those who design this built world? We all need to get much smarter about HVAC systems, for starters — guarding against truck bombs is just one small piece of the puzzle. And the most vulnerable sites are not necessarily the most visible. LNG deliveries in Boston Harbor obviously merit consideration, but so do those R&D labs along Route 128. The editors conclude by also warning of what might be terrorism's most dangerous threat: overreacting.

The body/building connection... In ***The Next American City***'s transportation issue (Issue 10), Eric Amster contributes to the growing understanding that the built environment is a public-health issue ("Health by Design: The Crusade for Healthier Cities in the Sacramento Valley"). How and where we build affects air quality, asthma rates and, especially, obesity. Amster, a fourth-year medical student, describes a new crop of recent studies that examine the science behind these connections, and then discusses in depth California's current efforts to put research into practice in the Sacramento Valley. The most difficult challenge? Getting urban designers, planners, and public-health officials to sit down and talk together. ■

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA, is a designer at Rogers Marvel Architects in New York City.

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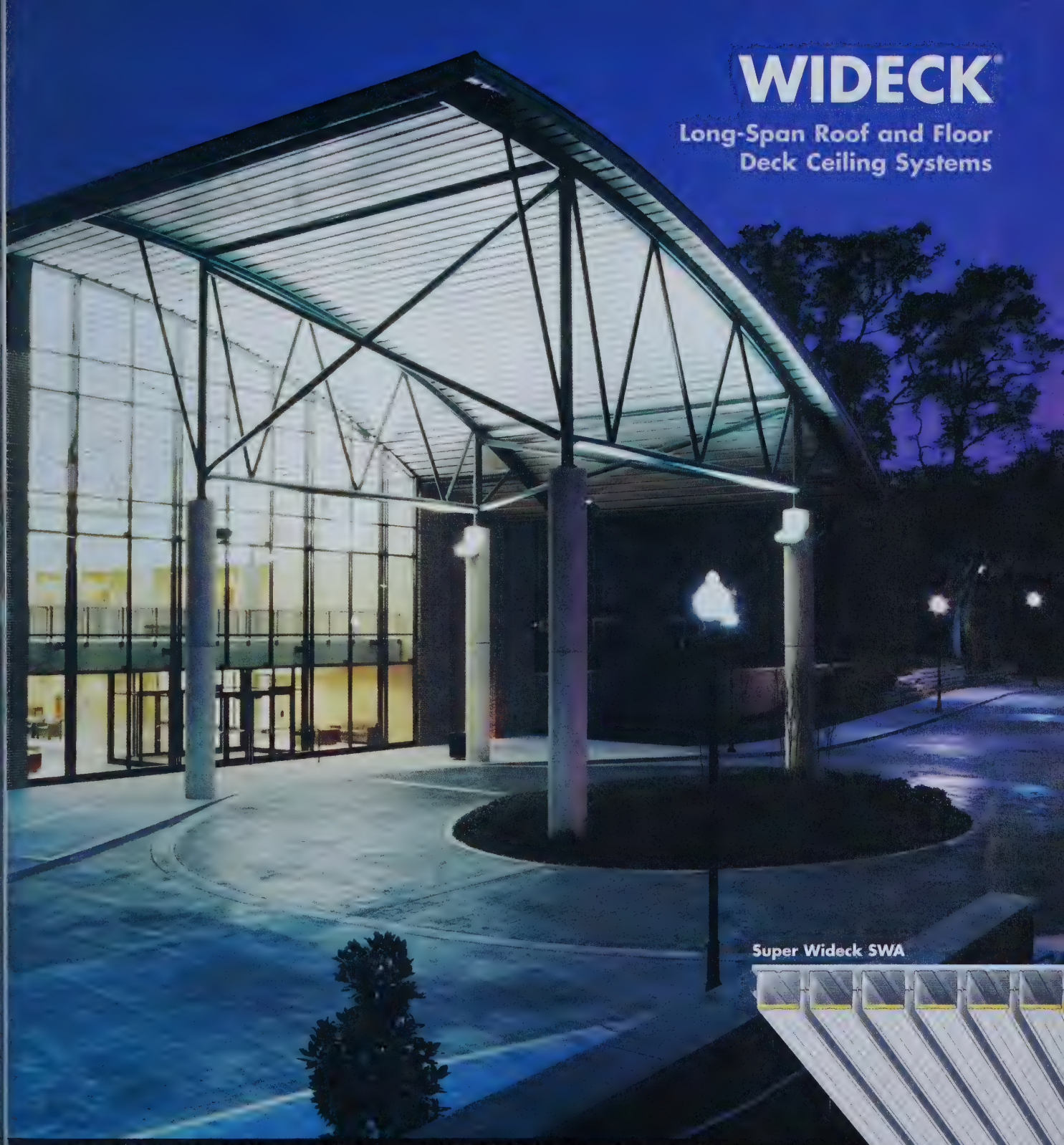

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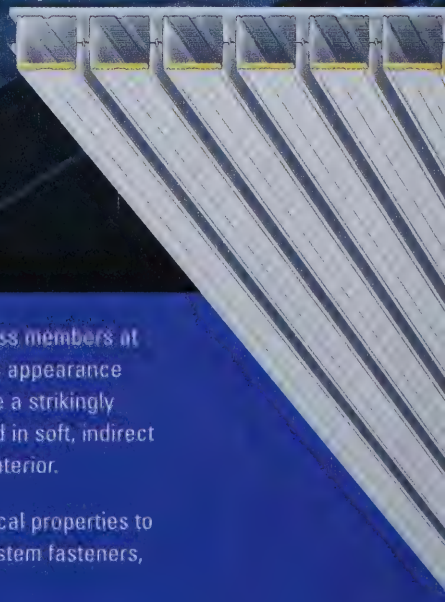

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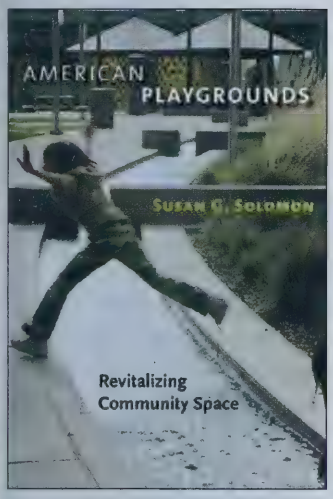


AMERICAN PLAYGROUNDS: REVITALIZING COMMUNITY SPACE
by Susan G. Solomon
University Press of New England, 2005

If everything we need to know in life we learn in kindergarten, then there is a lot riding on the default setting for our playgrounds. In the age of obesity, our playgrounds are starving. Whatever happened to the adventurous equipment and design that once promised to infuse our children with social, physical, and improvisational skills and the courage to take risks? What keeps the few excellent playgrounds we do have from igniting a mass movement? Art historian Susan G. Solomon probes such timely questions as she brings a critical eye to a subject of some urgency.

Solomon's cursory historical review overlooks the first public playground, designed by Olmsted at Charlesbank in Boston in 1892, and picks up the story after World War II. Aldo van Eyck's playgrounds in the Netherlands provided war-ravaged cities with carefully orchestrated gathering places. Lady Allen pioneered the adventure playground in Britain. On steep terrain in New York's Riverside Park, sculptor Isamu Noguchi and architect Louis Kahn collaborated on a playground whose topographical forms were as integrated as sculpture. Soon landscape architect M. Paul Friedberg took design for play seriously enough to attract national interest, including that of manufacturers of timber structures inspired by his design. Children, it seemed a generation ago, would find fantasy and adventure at age-appropriate levels of risk in an ever-expanding culture of creative playground design.

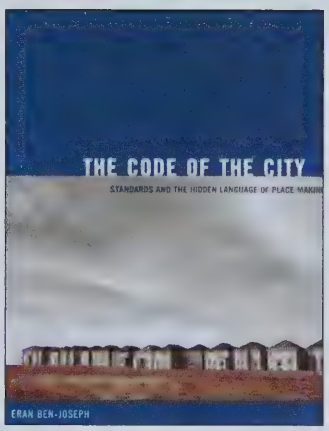
Despite such great expectations, in the last 30 years, banality triumphed, thanks to the ADA, the Consumer Products Safety Commission, hyperlitigious parents, and the insurance industry. Playgrounds free of variety, complexity, challenge, adaptability, and enchantment are likely to be free of users, who have moved indoors and in front of screens.

Designers, most of them landscape architects, many of them women, are fighting back, looking beyond stock pirate ships and castles at inventive design that begets inventive play. They are forming a backlash against what Solomon calls "overly safe and terminally boring equipment." Likewise, there is hope on the litigation front; some states have passed recreational immunity statutes to encourage more risk-taking by local officials.

The best environments for play may not even be playgrounds, but hybrid spaces that offer something for adults and children alike. Parents and kids can skateboard together at Extreme Park in Louisville, a concept so rare that families fly in from across the country to use it. Transcending the commodification of play equipment and the lost sense of place, designers are introducing play structures that are more like interactive sculpture than traditional "equipment."

American Playgrounds is not itself playful — there are few moments of whimsy or splashes of color. Nor is it a how-to book with plans and cost information. But this illustrated monograph, replete with case studies, is impassioned and deserves to be read by all those who care for our playgrounds and care about our children.

Tom Paine ASLA is a senior landscape architect at Brown Richardson & Rowe, landscape architects and planners in Boston.



THE CODE OF THE CITY: STANDARDS AND THE HIDDEN LANGUAGE OF PLACE MAKING
by Eran Ben-Joseph
MIT Press, 2005

"**All bad precedents began** as justifiable measures." Eran Ben-Joseph doesn't tell us what Julius Caesar was referring to with this observation, but makes it clear how he would like us to apply these words. Our physical environment is largely shaped by ideas and engineering practices that crystallized as codes and standards between 50 and 100 years ago, preventing planning, design, and construction from evolving with new ideas and technological innovation. Bad precedents can be discarded, but the institutional inertia of professional practices and legalized codes have a life of their own. Ben-Joseph, a landscape architect, urban planner, and MIT professor, is not expounding from an ivory tower. While this study includes a history of codes beginning with the obligatory Hammurabi, the bulk of the book is devoted to a critique of modern codes and standards, the rule books of place-making against which the author has been butting his head throughout his professional career.

How you frame the solution depends upon how you perceive the problem. If the problem is congestion and overcrowding, then zoning regulations limiting density and requiring wider roads to facilitate

traffic are the solution. If, however, suburban sprawl, stormwater runoff, habitat destruction, a lack of social cohesiveness, as well as air pollution and loss of productivity from automobile traffic congestion are the problems, then a different regulatory recipe is called for. Ben-Joseph makes his case for the obsolescence of current codes by documenting their impact: wasteful land-use; proliferation of impermeable surfaces; and inefficient water treatment and conservation practices. He lists the innovations that can shape a new regulatory matrix, from common-interest communities and the use of ecological biocriteria to affordable pier foundations minimizing excessive soil disturbance and state-of-the-art computer simulations. Emphasizing the damage done by the imposition of generic standards, he argues for the need to allow for local responses to local conditions. Although he applauds the development of a single model building code by the International Code Council, he is wary of the application of other codes in the ICC family, fearing an outcome similar to the impact of standardized subdivision regulations. Instead, he favors the efforts of the New Urbanists and others who promote performance-based, contextual standards — rules that allow for experimentation.

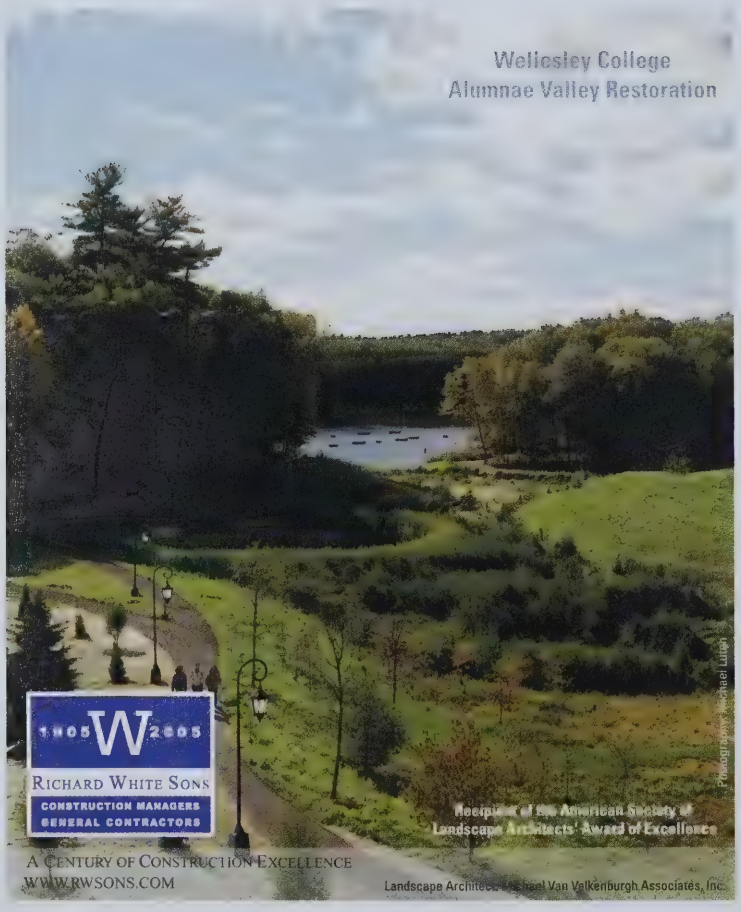
One omission is any review of the process of code adoption at the local level. An examination of the political nature of this process might dampen the author's enthusiasm for localized control over the development of codes and standards. Ben-Joseph also fails to fully explore the impact of "green design" on the future of codes and standards. *The Code of the City* helps us to understand how we got to where we are today, but will require a sequel to help us understand how to get to where we want to be tomorrow.

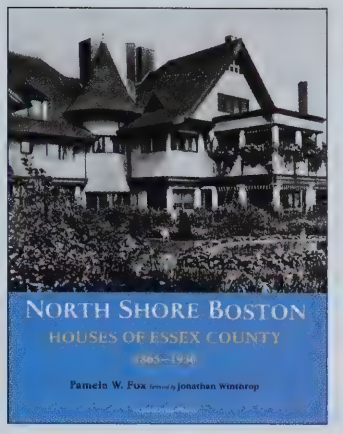
A. Vernon Woodworth AIA is a former building official and is currently a code consultant with the Sullivan Code Group in Boston and chair of the BSA Codes Committee.

HOUSES OF THE BERKSHIRES 1870-1930
by Richard S. Jackson Jr. and Cornelia Brooke Gilder
Acanthus Press, 2006

NORTH SHORE BOSTON: HOUSES OF ESSEX COUNTY 1865-1930
by Pamela W. Fox
Acanthus Press, 2005

It is easy to imagine that a wealthy traveler might have arrived in Boston Harbor in 1840 on the Cunard line from London and freshened up at the elegant Maverick House Hotel before boarding a train bound for a grand estate on the North Shore. With the opening in 1835 of the 80-room hotel in Maverick Square, the East Boston Company was hoping to transform East Boston into a resort area similar to Nahant. But wealthy Bostonians had already begun to retreat to more insular locations away from the city during the heat of summer. The cooling breezes coming off the coastline of the North Shore and the clear mountain air in the Berkshires provided the relief





they were seeking. Just two decades later, it was clear that East Boston had secured a different future, as a maritime industrial center and home to thousands of new immigrants, and that the Gilded Age of resort communities (which also included Newport and Bar Harbor) had begun.

Two recent books on the Massachusetts resorts of the North Shore and the Berkshires examine "rich men and their houses" from 1865-1930. This period was marked by old family fortunes multiplying through investments in textiles and railroads along with new fortunes being made in similar ventures. Railroads also provided the new leisure class with convenient travel to their country destinations. The inaugural run of the Eastern Railroad from Boston to Salem in 1838 was followed by the rapid addition of new coastal and inland branches throughout the North Shore. Lenox and Stockbridge were also an easy trip by train. As Jackson and Gilder point out, "all it took was the discipline to remember to alert a chauffeur for each end of the journey."

With a combined total of over 700 floor plans and historic photographs of these grand houses (many never before published), these books offer glimpses into the lifestyles of the owners while providing an architectural record of a unique period in American history. Although there are many estates that appear to be transplanted from the English countryside, several houses from this period prove that American architects were attempting to break with the past and experiment with new styles. Both books examine the leading role that Boston architects played in introducing their clients to more inventive design while educating them on the importance of site planning and integration with the landscape.

Although this resort lifestyle ended after just a few generations and many of the houses were demolished, there are still quite a number in use as private homes or that have been acquired by schools and nonprofits. Land-conservation groups and preservation commissions also saved many of these structures for the public to enjoy. These books remind us why we should care.

Mark Ruckman is an associate editor of *ArchitectureBoston* and is pursuing an MBA at the Heller School at Brandeis University.

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MAVERICK: DISAPPEARING VIEWS
www.themavericksite.org
This site is the brainchild of Jennifer Gilbert, a graduate of the MIT School of Architecture and Planning, and documents the past and present of Maverick Gardens (now Maverick Landing), a 414-unit public housing project in East Boston that was redeveloped by the Boston Housing Authority. Includes interviews with residents who lived through the race riots of the 1970s and traces the outcome of the revitalization program.

EAST BOSTON EATS
http://eastbostoneats.com
An East Boston resident and his mom started a tradition of trying a different restaurant every Thursday night. They encountered great food, good prices, wonderful people, and no crowds. They want to get the word out that East Boston is a dining destination. Be careful what you wish for.

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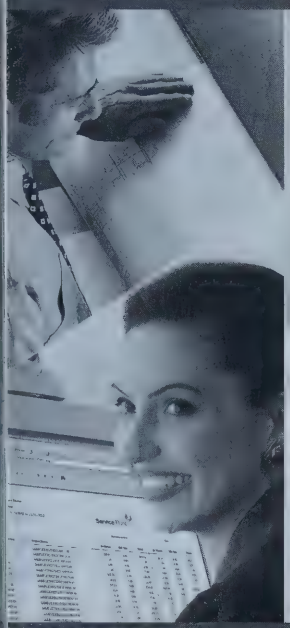

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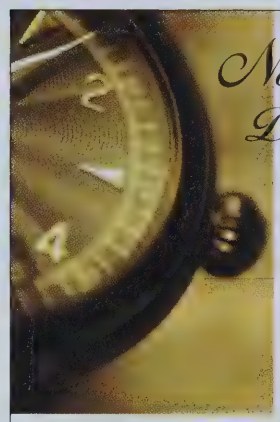

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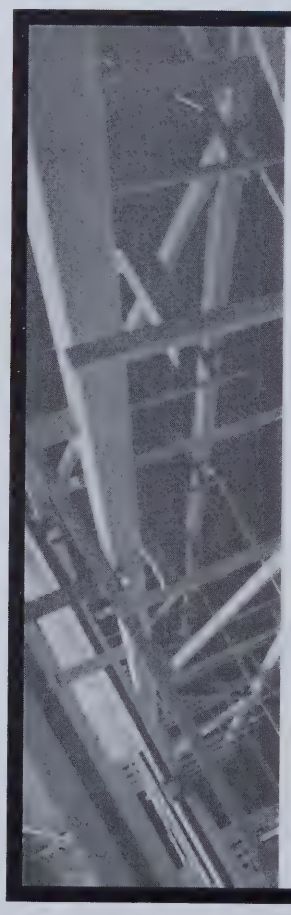

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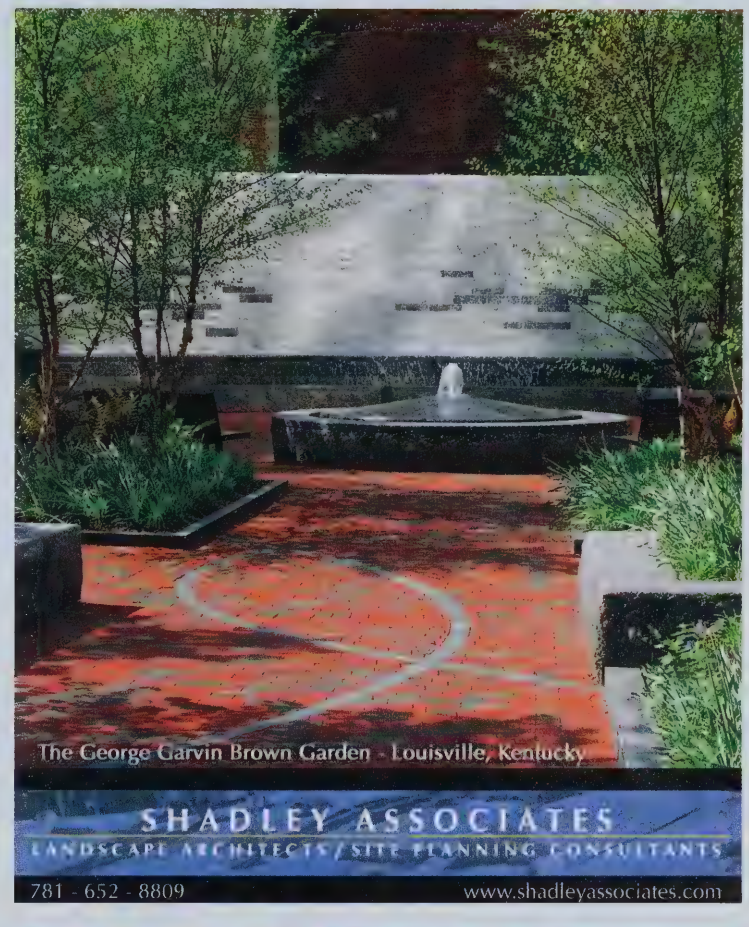

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11 Meridian Street

I love reading the real-estate transactions published periodically in *The Boston Globe*, and not just because of the voyeuristic thrill I get snooping on the neighbors (they paid *how much* for that house?!). The property-transfer notices list the names of buyers and sellers as well as the price, so they are a kind of miniature anthropological study, a lens on the changing city. When Murphy sells to Nguyen, or Lombardi sells to Rodriguez, you know the neighborhood is in transition. And when Rodriguez sells to Herrera, you know the transition is complete.

In East Boston, a neighborhood I know better than anyplace even though it's been 20 years since I moved out, the names on the deeds have been flipping like flapjacks. Between the 1990 and 2000 census, while Boston as a whole was shrinking, East Boston gained 6,000 residents, most of them immigrants. It saw more demographic change over the decade than any other section of the city.

I lived in East Boston for five idealistic, happy years from 1978 to 1982, much of that time running a small shoestring weekly called the *East Boston Community News*. It was my first newspaper job, and I imprinted on the neighborhood like a newborn duckling. I would walk to the converted second-floor apartment near Maverick Square that served as the newspaper's office, reveling in every greeting or complaint I encountered along the way. Could we do something about the vacant lot on Bremen Street that was collecting trash? Would we be covering the big meeting on the piers development? Why did we stop running the church bingo times?

We rented 11 Meridian Street, above Lee's fabric shop, from an Italian tailor for $115 a month: two large rooms with no central heating. The darkroom enlarger was suspended over the bathtub. When we needed heat, we cranked up the oven. We had meetings of the all-volunteer staff there, typeset and laid out the paper using hot wax and Letraset, fretted constantly over money, and plotted how to empower ordinary people in a low-income neighborhood under siege from airport expansion, urban social ills, and an often indifferent government.

While 1970s activism was giving way to smug self-absorption, Jimmy Carter's earnestness to Ronald Reagan's chauvinism, and protest-rock to disco, the *Community News* was an institution that knit East Boston together. We didn't make any pretense to objectivity; ours was advocacy journalism, on the side of the neighborhood in every battle. For neophytes, we were surprisingly effective at muckraking: shaming absentee landlords into repairing their properties; keeping ever-vigilant of airport expansion; even conducting an arson investigation into property owners with "more than their share of bad luck."

One advantage East Boston had in those days was coherence. According to the 1980 US census, the neighborhood then was 96 percent white. Irish and (mostly) Italian immigrants had been settled there for two generations, and a certain unity had been forged through shared adversity.

But nothing is permanent, least of all living, breathing cities. The *Community News* ceased publication in 1989, and today its office is immigrant housing again; the Italian tailor is now a Spanish-American grocery and convenience store. According to the most recent census, Eastie is now 50 percent white and 39 percent Latino.

The fact is, the seeming stability in the 1970s was just a lull between demographic shifts. When I tried to sell ads, I cajoled and flattered Jewish merchants whose families had long since decamped to Lynnfield or Peabody but who still operated Broadway Stationers in Central Square, the Consumers Credit Union, and the cavernous "seconds" clothing store, Lacy's (motto: "Tiny imperfections you will hardly notice").

Now they say million-dollar condos are coming to East Boston. For all our coverage of land-use issues, gentrification was never much of a worry. Today I watch the scaffolding rise and the neighbors struggle for a living — and a voice — and I think: This place could really use a community newspaper. ■

Renée Loth is editorial-page editor of *The Boston Globe*.

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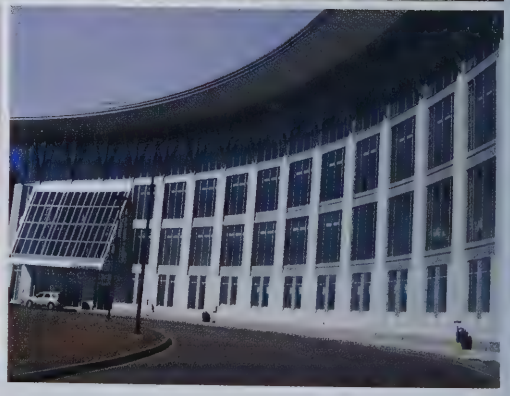

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No Day at the Beach

OK, so it's winter. Quit your grumbling, whining, whinging, and kvetching. The biggest problem with winter is not the cold and the dark, but our own bad attitude.

Mark Twain observed, "Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it." He was wrong. In fact, lots of people do something about the weather: they move. Weather, specifically our winter, is one of the first explanations given for Boston's recent population drop. Gleeful émigrés send reports from North Carolina, Florida, Texas, and Arizona, describing low-cost housing, good jobs — and wonderful weather. (These reports are never sent in July.)

Maybe some of the folks who have moved on are the pessimists and malcontents no one wants around anyway; Anton Chekhov — who knew something about cold weather — wrote that happy people don't notice whether it's winter or summer. But we have reason to worry: a declining population has deep economic and political ramifications. We need to think about both sides of the population equation — attracting and retaining. In an era when there are few tethers tying people geographically, we need to be smart about attracting and retaining those who can make a real contribution. And if our winters are part of the problem, it's time to rethink our solutions.

One solution requires changing our attitude. Winter is a state of mind and, as contributor Norman Pressman notes, it's also a relative condition: the gorgeous gold-colored evening grosbeak on your backyard feeder has come south for the winter. For too long, the best we've been able to say about winter is that it's good for the character. Anne Bradstreet may have defined New England's relationship with its climate for generations when she wrote, "If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome." Unfortunately, character isn't playing too well in today's culture of self-esteem and immediate gratification. Today, Anne would be tasting 'tinis and blogging from South Beach.

But the New England way is not the only way. Many cultures — perhaps most notably in Scandinavia — have adapted to winter conditions far more extreme than ours and learned to embrace the season. Winter brings its own pleasures, and other societies celebrate those pleasures, establishing rituals and traditions and making accommodations that are part of their very identity. They have found reason to welcome winter.

Another solution explains why *ArchitectureBoston* has taken on the subject of winter: Let's think of winter as a design problem. We can do more than just dress for the weather — we can design for it. We can design a cityscape that responds to our climate; we can invent new traditions that celebrate it. Building technology today encourages us to ignore winter; we no longer need to huddle around the hearth in order to survive. Technology has liberated us, but it has also stripped us of the will to find innovative responses to the cold season. By looking for design inspiration in our climate, we can establish a culture that views the dark months with anticipation rather than dread. And by creating a city that better accommodates its climate, we can improve the lives of the homeless, the elderly, the disabled, and others for whom winter remains a threat to survival.

In an era when there are few tethers tying people geographically, we need to be smart about attracting and retaining those who can make a real contribution. And if our winters are part of the problem, it's time to rethink our solutions.

Boston's winters are marked by slush and mud as much as by snow and ice. Put another way, they are frequently mild and nearly always changeable; people in some parts of the world might envy us. As Henry David Thoreau, another archetypal New Englander, once recorded in his journal: "'Hear! Hear!' screamed the jay from a neighboring tree, where I had heard a tittering for some time, 'winter has a concentrated and nutty kernel, if you know where to look for it.'"

Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA
Editor

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PROSOCO

Admiration and thanks for a multidirectional look at that curiously voiceless (as Renée Loth noted) and often invisible island, East Boston [September/October 2006]. With some nostalgia for the mainland downtown, I called it "East of Eden" when I moved in six years ago and peered — from a four-decker built doubtless by Donald McKay's shipwrights between launchings — over the harbor, the tanker traffic, and the tugboat wharf in my backyard, toward the other waterfront, the Old North Church spire, Charlestown, and the Mystic River Bridge. But it turns out that the town is a sort of Eden unto itself — an Eden of the dense, intense, modest, mannerly, family-spirited old urbanism, and a smart challenge to the new. Somewhere between neglect and renaissance, between the Italian landlords and Latino tenants, at the Café Italia with its Old Eastie clientele and its brilliant all-Brazilian kitchen, this may as well be remembered as an Edenic moment.

The only stroke I would add to your profile of East Boston is simply this: in an age of multipurpose dread, the town has a remarkable *fearlessness* about it. Cheerful East Bostonians of many stripes and generations seem to be fearless about the past, and the future, including the new apartments. They walk the streets — singles, pairs, and clusters — fearless of crime, and of each other. From the start, it struck me that East Boston is miraculously free of those venerable Boston hang-ups focused on race and on strangers. And that freedom from fear makes a radical difference in the life of the town. Concretely: if East Boston had been responsible for planning the new South Boston Waterfront, it would have put housing on that precious land and made a modern paradise of it, for people! If the architects do their job with some style, East Boston will surely make the most of its new neighbors and its overdue attention.

Christopher Lydon
Radio host, Open Source
East Boston

You know what I love about Greg and Tacey Luongo's article ["Who Is East Boston?" September/October 2006]? They understand what makes East Boston great. It's not the miles of waterfront, the spectacular views of downtown, the incredible parks and public spaces, nor Eastie's gritty, storied past of immigrants and shipbuilders. The Luongos understand that East Boston is about individual people — each with a different story but a common love of the neighborhood.

I grew up in the suburbs and hardly knew my neighbors. I moved to the North End and, though I loved the neighborhood and the cafés, I still felt like a guest. But in Eastie, I'm home. Neighbors knock on my door if they see my car getting a ticket. When I walked out of my house this morning, I said hello to four neighbors before reaching my car — only 100 yards away. There are some great dives, but there aren't really any pubs; so what do people do? They have neighborhood house parties; imagine that. Three generations of the same Italian family live next door to us. On the other side live three generations of a Salvadoran family. Across the street? A triple-decker converted into condos, occupied by an African-American woman, a white professional male, and a gay couple.

Parks and architecture are great, but the greatest thing about Eastie is the variety of the people who live and love it here. It's about people from different countries, ethnicities, races, economic and social classes, sexual orientations, and political beliefs who all love the same neighborhood. This urban barrio of Italians, Latinos, artists, and professionals is, in many ways, the ultimate American neighborhood.

Rob Pyles
Audissey Guides
East Boston

Your East Boston issue brought back many memories. I came to East Boston in 1969 to work for two years as a community organizer, with plans to return to New York and finish architecture school. The Neighborhood Council, with support from the Boston Archdiocesan Planning Office, was seeking federal funds to create the East Boston Community Development Corporation. My job was to find out from residents and activists what was needed and incorporate their ideas into development plans. Our original office is now Café Italia on Meridian Street.

The *East Boston Community News* began as a newsletter of the project in response to repeated requests for a real newspaper instead of the advertising rag that was the only paper in Eastie. The *Community News* became an independent newspaper after the first controversial story related to the airport and the governor's race.

After my two years were up, I was rooted in East Boston and chose to stay. When I joined Urban Edge at the end of 1977, my wife Joan and I considered moving to Jamaica Plain to be closer to work, but chose to stay in East Boston. Over the course of 30 years, Joan fell in love with everything Italian. Now our neighbors next door and across the yard are from El Salvador and much of the music we hear has a Latin beat. Our block, like all of East Boston, celebrates many cultures and races.

We did not own a car until four years ago. Joan took the T to work and I got there via the ferry followed by a 20-minute bike ride. But most mornings I was the only rider, so the ferry service ended. With the anticipated waterfront development, I look forward to the return of the ferry so I can bike to work again.

Mossik Hacobian
East Boston

Your recent issue on Eastie performs a valuable service. You reveal the new community and its connection to the past. Eastie epitomizes the Gateway City, holding on to the broadest possible range of housing options and fostering community through civic engagement.

The world has come and continues to come to Eastie and call it home; now all Boston is coming, too. The number of windows overlooking Boston Harbor is now greater than the number overlooking Boston Common. The harbor is our shared front yard and new Common. The Piers Park sailing program and Zumix reflect the real Boston at play. An unstated challenge, however, is the need for cultural space and meeting places for old and new residents, both the "lifers" and the young, mobile types. Shared space is vital, and visitors need a welcome mat. What gets built to serve these needs remains a challenge.

Westy Egmont
Boston

Architecture embodies the values of the cultural milieu in which it is created. How unfortunate, then, that "on time" and "on budget" constitute the cultural milieu of most architects today. And those granted the resources to transcend those hazards seem to regard novelty and glamour as the muses most worth wooing.

What of the opportunity to serve humankind and the exquisite ecology that sustains life on this tiny planet? What of the comfort, dignity, and well-being of building inhabitants and likewise the well-being of generations hence? How might architects eschew ever-expanding consumption and embrace instead a steadfast moderation? And how will they ever persuade their clients to do so?

Happily, *ArchitectureBoston* attends to the loftier aspects of the practice of architecture with greater success than other segments of the architectural press. In a time when architects are said to design buildings with photo opportunities foremost in their minds, *ArchitectureBoston* acknowledges that architecture is about more than pretty pictures. The roundtable regularly includes wide-ranging perspectives on provocative topics. The photo essays explore the built environment from well outside the boundaries of conventional architectural photography. "Other Voices" closes each issue from the point of view of non-architects. In the most recent issue, "Who Is East Boston?" bore witness to the power of the built world to shape people's lives and sustain their spirit.

That being said, I invite you to throw even wider the doors that confine the architectural press to the world of commercial allure. Are we called upon to do more than engage in the commerce of construction? What else is there?

Jay Weber
Arlington, Massachusetts

I loved "Where the Girls Are" by Joan Wickersham [September/October 2006]. The engineering and architecture professions have much in common, including problems like a protracted uphill battle to increase the percentage of women and minority practitioners. Hopefully outreach by role models like Judith Nitsch will make inroads on the engineering side, and the lessons learned can inform the architecture community. Closing that gap would likely make practice better for everyone and possibly improve the built environment, too.

Jeremy Edmunds PE, LEED AP, Assoc. AIA
New York City

The interview between Mildred Schmertz and Jane Thompson in your July/August 2006 issue was informative and profoundly stimulating. Mildred Schmertz has always possessed a keen mind in the advocacy and promulgation of the profession of architecture. While I have never had the privilege or pleasure to meet Jane Thompson, I have followed the Thompson course of exemplary practice of architecture and design. Inherent in this interview were the thought process and action necessary if architecture, design, and joyful living are to thrive. Congratulations to two great visionary women.

Der Scutt FAIA
New York City

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ArchitectureBoston is mailed to members of the Boston Society of Architects and AIA members in New England and New York City. Subscription rate for others is $26 per year. Call 617.951.1433 x228 or e-mail architectureboston@architects.org.

ArchitectureBoston is custom-published bimonthly for the Boston Society of Architects by The Pohly Company.
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The redesign of *ArchitectureBoston* was supported by a grant from the Graham Foundation.

ArchitectureBoston invites story ideas that connect architecture to social, cultu political, and economic tren Editorial guidelines are at: www.architectureboston.com. *ArchitectureBoston* assumes no liability for unsolicited materials. The views expressed in *ArchitectureBoston* are not necessarily those of the editorial staff, the Boston Society of Architects, or The Pohly Company.

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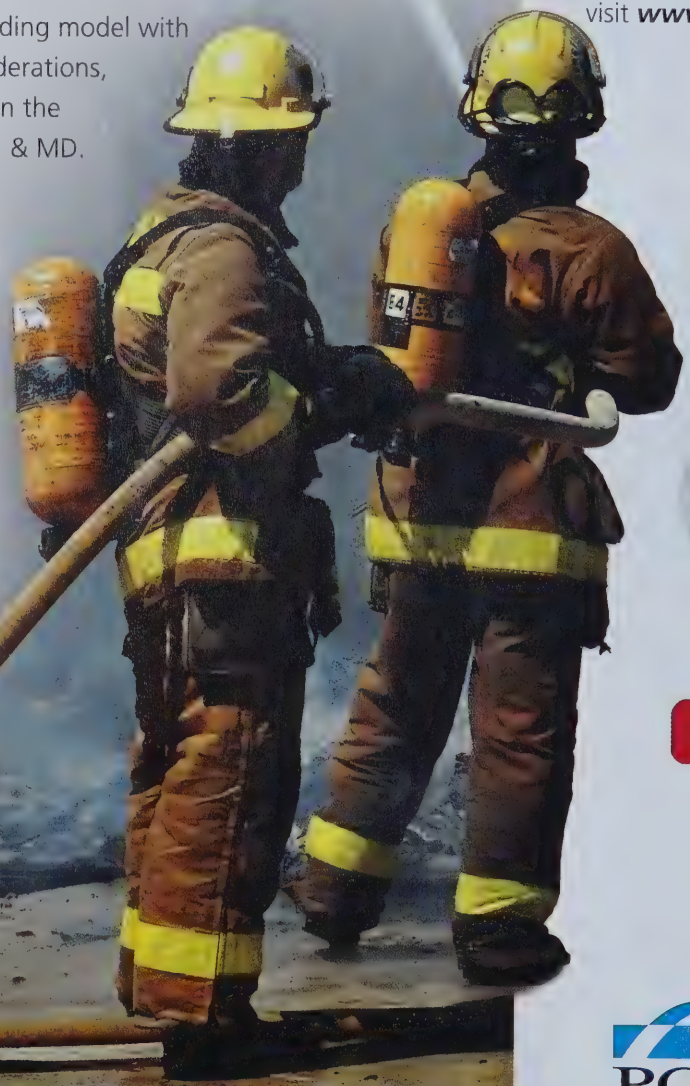

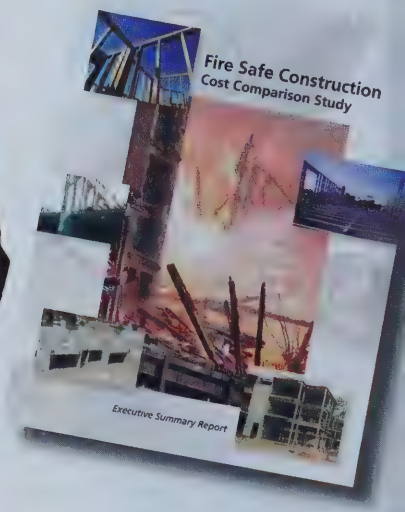

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Phaeno Science Center, Wolfsburg, Germany, 1999–2005. Zaha Hadid Architects.

Zaha Hadid

Guggenheim Museum, New York City
June 3–October 25, 2006

In a lecture, architect Peter Zumthor once declared that he would talk about his buildings only if they were still in design; anything built should be visited. Like music or food, architecture must be experienced directly. A recent exhibition at the Guggenheim illustrates why.

Zaha Hadid is a 30-year retrospective of the work of today's leading female starchitect. Spread along the Guggenheim's great spiral ramp, this collection of abstract paintings, drawings, photos, and three-dimensional objects catalogues Hadid's famous formal and spatial gymnastics. A group of exquisitely folded white paper models are a highlight. Hadid's stunning attention to craft in buildings and their representation is clear. I walked away struck by the beauty of what she makes.

And yet, for all the bluster of Hadid's public persona, the exhibition is remarkably timid, and never gets much beyond a marketing pitch. It seems that Hadid (or the architectural establishment around her) is still trying to establish her presence rather than using this opportunity to delve deeper. There's none of the creative processor vitality evident in the Frank Gehry exhibition on view in the same spot a few years ago, nor do the curators offer additional context, critical analysis, or the experience of being *in* a Hadid space. Instead, we're faced with collages of flat photos.

Hadid's Cincinnati Art Center is a remarkable building—spatially dynamic, well-crafted, beautiful in its own right while also enhancing the art on display inside. But I say this based on a recent Ohio road trip, not on this exhibition. If you miss *Zaha Hadid*, don't worry. Buy the catalogue, and then visit her buildings.

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA, is a designer at Rogers Marvel Architects in New York City.

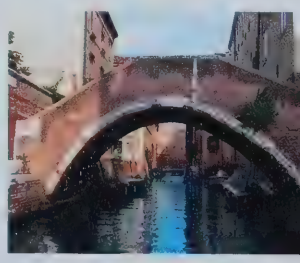
The Venetian Dilemma

Directed by Carole and Richard Rifkind
DVD, 56 minutes
(available from Filmakers Library; www.filmakers.com)

"**After 1,500 years,** Venice is running out of time. To survive, some say Venice must modernize. Or must she?" With this question, Carole and Richard Rifkind frame the bitter debate that has stirred the emotions of Venetians for 30 years. Their compelling and beautifully photographed documentary focuses sharply on the opposing views of the dilemma.

Residents, who believe that their city is "cracking under the weight" of tourists (a projected 20 million next year), seek to preserve their place and way of life. City planners recognize the impact of tourism on the city's delicate fabric and argue that "to preserve is to die." They propose an ambitious program of public-works projects to modernize the city's economic base, including a subway system connecting the island to the mainland and the airport.

Because of its unique heritage, Venice belongs to the world, not only to its residents. Venetians must stop bickering, develop creative ways to deal with tourism, and accept that change is inevitable. Venice is indeed running out of time.



Antonio Di Mambro FAIA is the principal of Antonio Di Mambro + Associates in Boston.

Sketches of Frank Gehry

Directed by Sidney Pollack
DVD, 83 minutes

Riding the documentary wave, Hollywood director Sidney Pollack (*Out of Africa, Tootsie*) agreed after much prodding to do a film on his longtime friend Frank Gehry. The result, *Sketches of Frank Gehry*, features sweeping money shots of popular Gehry stock: Bilbao, Disney Hall, and the Stata Center at MIT, among others, choreographed to an original, benign score. Woven among these arty montages are conversations between Pollack and Gehry at his house, in his car, and in his office. We also see Pollack and Philip Johnson, Pollack and Gehry's therapist, Pollack and the LA artists who make up Gehry's coterie.

If you're an architect and want to show your friends what you do, you might recommend this film. In Gehry's case, there's lots of folding, cutting, and taping of silver paper, heavy sighs, big hand gestures, and more cutting and taping. Such architectural drama seems to hold the audience's attention.

The film's underlying premise is that Gehry is the only architect with any guts. Perhaps you agree. (One of the most absurd or perfect scenes — depending on how you feel — is when he walks onto the stage of Disney Hall after a concert to a standing ovation, feigning humility.) A parade of celebs — the architectural kind (Herbert Muschamp) and the real kind (Dennis Hopper) — tells us why Gehry is the best. The only naysayer is Princeton professor Hal Foster, who is shot in some dark cave-like place, clearly unenlightened; he looks like Lurch from *The Addams Family*.

But what's shown also tells a darker story: Gehry works with only two people in his office of hundreds, and he's never seen wandering around the firm or interacting with any underlings. He's the lone genius; his believers do his bidding and give him wide berth. The film adulates the genius who dumped everything to express himself, including his entire staff and his first wife. (According to the film, dumping her was the critical step toward becoming Gehry the legend.) Creepily, this seems like a prequel to *My Architect* (the film about architect Louis Kahn): You can't help but think about the hapless victims of Gehry's ambition.

Rachel Levitt is a designer and writer.

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Life, Death, and Real Estate

The place: Mount Auburn Cemetery, on the border between Cambridge and Watertown, Massachusetts. Founded in 1831, Mount Auburn is the oldest of America's "garden cemeteries" and an icon of historic landscape design. Horticultural connoisseurs wander the 175 acres of trees, shrubs, and perennials. Birdwatchers come for thrushes and warblers. Architects gaze at the Egyptian Revival gate and the tombs of Charles Bulfinch and Mary Baker Eddy. Couples move slowly, holding hands or pushing strollers, using the place as the beautiful park it is. But then: a hearse, followed by car after car, crawls up a hill and down again, winding along the green avenues before finally disappearing from sight.

The president: Bill Clendaniel, who has directed Mount Auburn for 18 years. Among his many responsibilities — finances, curatorship, public education — is the challenge of keeping Mount Auburn going as an active burial place. Space is running out. Recent years have seen innovations: walls with inscriptions, a "condominiumized" obelisk carved with the names of the people whose remains surround it. Classic single or family gravesites are quite rare — and stunningly expensive — nowadays. As Bill says, "We only sell this land once."

10:05 Driving a jaunty little electric vehicle, Bill stops beside a shady bank where exploratory digging is going on, supervised by one of the cemetery's two salespeople. Several gravesites are available in this little glade — but there are pipes running beneath the bank. Once the digging has pinpointed the pipes' location, slim gray mock-up headstones will be nestled into the greenery to mark the available gravesites and give a prospective client an idea of the final effect.

10:17 Bill stops his vehicle near a small forklift that's nosing the ground, peeling up a neat rectangle of turf. A grave-liner, which resembles a gigantic lidded cement shoebox, waits by the roadside. "This for tomorrow?" Bill asks.

The gravedigger nods. "We got two full burials, and three cremated." Grave-digging, pruning, mowing, and other noisy landscaping activities are carefully scheduled at times when there are no burial services taking place.

10:40 Back at his office, Bill checks messages. He notes down details about a concert that will figure in the cemetery's year-long 175th-anniversary celebration and leaves a message for a developer working on a housing project adjacent to the cemetery, who wants to discuss the purchase of a sliver of land.

11:05 Bill shakes hands with an assured, beautifully dressed woman who has come with her daughter to look at seven of Mount Auburn's most idyllic — and costliest — available gravesites. They chat for a few moments, and then climb into one of the little electric vehicles and drive off for a private tour.

12:55 Carrying his lunch salad, Bill joins an in-progress horticulture meeting. The staff is planning the construction and planting of an area to be called Birch Gardens, along a section of the cemetery's perimeter. The design, by Halvorson Design Partnership, calls for both casket plots and smaller plots for cremated remains, with all the inscriptions appearing on communal granite walls — a model which, in real-estate terms, increases density, building an apartment complex rather than a neighborhood of single-family houses. (And, as one might expect when comparing apartments to fancy houses, the purchase price here will be significantly lower.)

The right mix of trees and shrubs will be crucial, both to create a particular garden "identity" for the area and as a visual and acoustic screen from the nearby public roadway.

The staff briefs Bill on the discussion: "We're debating fall versus spring planting."

Fall would suit the conifers called for in the design, but some of the specified trees — beeches and elms — are spring-dug.

"If planting is delayed till spring, you're going to have a big bare wall for another six

months. And it's not going to be easy to sell a big bare wall."

Bill: "We can't make plants do what they don't want to do. And we're not going to sell much in the late fall or winter anyway."

1:14 The group critiques planting plans submitted by the landscape architect, beginning with trees. The conversation is technical, cryptic, passionate, and very fast. "I'd like to replace this group of three Doug fir with white fir."

"OK, this umbrella pine — let's specify 'Wintergreen' as the cultivar, if we can find one of any size. It's something we don't already have."

"Hmm, this heptacodium. It's going to require a lot of maintenance and pruning to get it to be tree-like. We need something upright. Let's put in a magnolia as an alternative. Or throw a prunus in there."

1:35 "Are we done with trees?"

"No, wait. I'm concerned about size. I don't think we need five or six calipers of anything. We could go down to three-and-a-half or four."

"We'll specify a mix of sizes, to look more natural."

"And it'll be cheaper, too."

"Listen, the cost of landscaping here is nothing, compared to the granite."

"Peanuts."

"Budget-dust."

1:42 Shrubs. More rapid, rabid discussion.

"*Sixty* rhododendron 'Gumpo'? No. I question the hardiness. Give us 20 of them, and 20 each of two other things, and I'd feel better."

"And these deutzias are going to grow slowly. They're spaced too far apart."

1:50 Bulbs and perennials.

"*Anemone sylvestris.* They've specified 88 — but they're invasive."

"So really we only need 22."

"*Anemone blanda.* 4,000 bulbs. Anyone have a problem?"

"I do. They die out."

"But they buy you time while other plantings fill in."

2:37 Another meeting begins, the goal of which is to figure out how to divide up and sell the burial plots and inscription space of Birch Gardens. Drawings are unrolled on the table: plans of the graves and elevations of the granite walls. A patchwork grid of variously sized squares and rectangles. Silence. "I don't quite get how the wall relates to the ground," someone finally says.

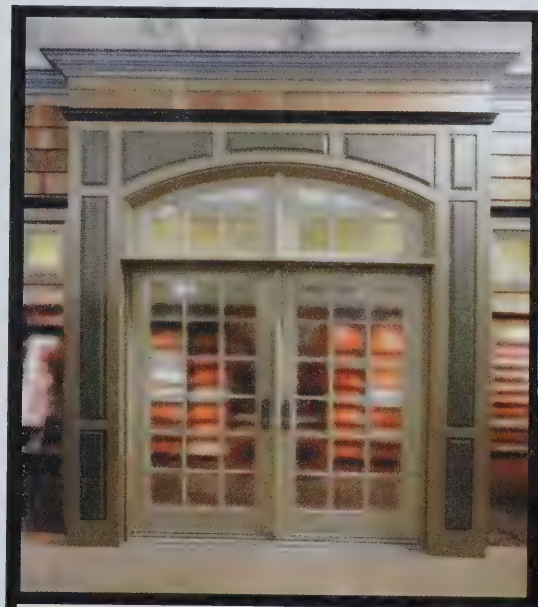
The project manager explains: urns and caskets will be placed in the ground, with corresponding inscriptions on the wall.

"But where? If my dad is in the ground over here, where will his place on the wall be?"

2:44 Everyone is still peering at the drawings. The conversation is frank: not disrespectful, but not overly sentimental either. This is a business meeting, a gloves-off airing of issues that need to be resolved.

"I'm just trying to understand — see, the way you have this divided up into rectangles and squares, it looks like space for a family of four."

"That's right."



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"But two would have to be buried, and two cremated?"

"That happens," one of the sales reps puts in. "People within the same family can want different things."

"Yeah, but isn't that awfully specific? You could wait a long time before that particular family walks in."

2:50 "You seem to be assuming that the big burial spaces correspond to the big inscriptions on the wall. But what if a cremation person wants to buy space for a big inscription?"

"Then we have to find a casket person who wants a small inscription."

3:10 One of the sales reps clutches his pocket, which has started to buzz, and grimaces. "Who's calling me now?" He goes out of the room to take the call. In a minute he's back. "Sorry, I have to leave. Someone's here wanting to buy a bench or a tree."

3:12 The other sales rep peers at the plans. "One-and-a-half feet by one, for two sets of cremated remains? You can't do that."

"We might be able to go even smaller, if we just dig deeper."

The sales rep shakes his head. "Not good."

"But is it possible? Could they fit?"

The sales rep shakes his head. "You need to leave room to dig around. Some margin for error. You don't want to accidentally hit—"

"What if we install cement liners?"

"This is Cambridge. People here want earth to *earth*."

3:20 "What if we do one foot square, and require an urn?"

"We've never required an urn. Some people just want a cardboard box."

"The real issue is retrieval. People move and want to take the ashes with them. If you use cardboard, we can't guarantee we'll get 'em all."

4:05 The meeting has adjourned; the discussion will be continued.

Driving back through the cemetery to the office, Bill stops at a corner where two men in safety glasses are attending to an ancient, enormous beech. The tree was damaged several years ago during a heavy April snowstorm and developed a debilitating canker. It's looking ravaged. "Time for it to go?" Bill asks the arborists.

"Probably."

Bill glances across the road, where a similarly beautiful, but healthy, beech shades an empty gravesite. A couple is interested in buying it, but only if Bill can promise that the beech will remain. Of course he can't: natural catastrophes happen, living things age and die. The landscape, carefully and sensitively preserved as it is, changes.

The couple, Bill suspects, will be anxious when they see that the other beech is gone. "But we'll figure out something beautiful to plant in its place. And they might well be reassured, watching how we respond to the loss." ■

Joan Wickersham is a writer in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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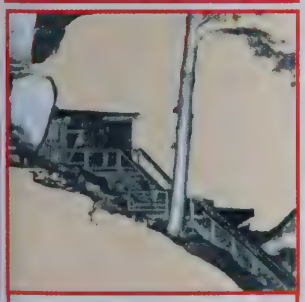

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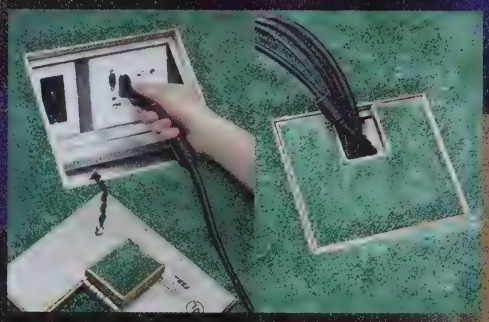

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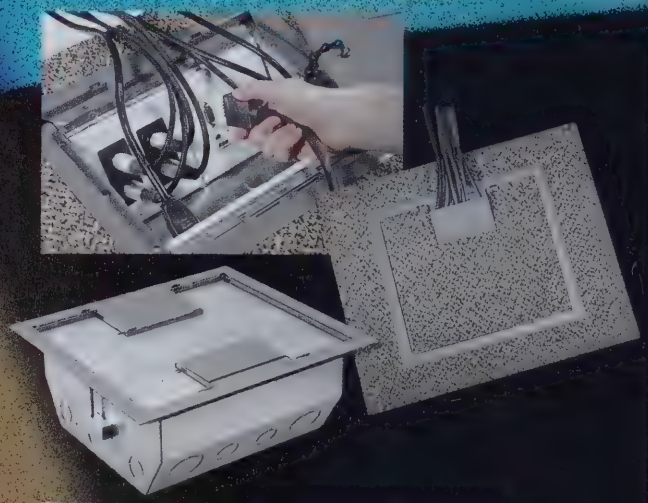

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Norman Pressman MCIP, OPPI, RPP is a planner and an internationally recognized authority on cold-climate urban planning and design. Professor emeritus of urban planning at the University of Waterloo, he was also the founding president of the Winter Cities Association. His books include *Northern Cityscape* (the recipient of a Canadian Institute of Planners Award of Excellence in 1996) and *Shaping Cities for Winter* (2004).

Jeff Stein AIA is the director of the architecture program at the Boston Architectural College and is the architecture critic for *Banker & Tradesman*.

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Your mother always told you to dress for the weather. Did she mention *design* for the weather?

Norman Pressman talks with Jeff Stein AIA

Jeff Stein: You are considered something of a visionary in the world of city planning, especially for the billion or so people who live north of the 45th parallel. Through all your work, you argue for sense of place. The Hopi people of the American Southwest have a phrase for it: "Grow where you're planted." Meaning, understand where you are, and try to live there in some beauty. It doesn't sound so difficult, really, and yet in significant ways many of us in the North, and in the very far South of the planet, aren't really doing it, are we?

Norman Pressman: I don't think we are. In urban design, we have forgotten the lessons of the past. We have forgotten about vernacular architecture. The vernacular always considered the local climate, the resources, the lifestyles, the traditions. With modern technology and the dominance of the car, we've forgotten completely about climate. Planning and designing and managing a good "winter city" simply factors in the climate with a little more attention and emphasis, especially where the winter is hostile and lasts for many months. But climate, especially winter, has been ignored for at least the last 40 years, since urban design made a big comeback in North America.

Jeff Stein: We have an entire educational industry that has made a habit of ignoring winter, in what might be a nostalgic longing for the benign climate of the classical cultures of Greece and Rome.

Norman Pressman: Therein lies one of the basic flaws of urban planning. I was introduced to the problem with the help of a Canadian journalist named Jack Royle, who asked me to do a little talk back in 1983 about livable cities through a climatic lens. He had lived and worked all across Canada, and observed that urban design and urban development were almost identical regardless of latitude, climate, temperature, windiness. And it really puzzled him. He said, "Isn't there something we can do about it?"

Jeff Stein: Is there a scientific definition of what winter is exactly?

Norman Pressman: Winter is a relative phenomenon. Nobody completely agrees on what it is. One of the essential elements of winter is its variability. There is no such thing as a consistent winter, any more than there is a consistent summer, spring, or fall. You can have a mean precipitation level from less than half an inch to more than 15 inches in January. You can have between zero and 150 hours of sunshine in January. And temperatures can range from 30 below Fahrenheit to 40 above Fahrenheit. The only scientifically accepted definition of winter is the astronomical definition: it occurs between December 22 and March 21.

But there are five basic elements that are understood to constitute winter: temperatures normally below freezing; precipitation, usually in the form of snow; restricted hours of sunshine and daylight; prolonged periods of those three elements; and significant seasonal variation. That having been said, the generally accepted definition of a "winter city" — this is something I concocted — is a place where the mean maximum daytime temperature is usually below freezing for at least two months in the year. In other words, there's some snow cover, and people would say they can go skating or skiing. At high altitudes and in mid-latitude regions, roughly between the 40th and 60th parallels, winter can constitute anywhere between 75 and 250 days a year. But for some people, winter has very little to do with snow and freezing temperatures: up in the sub-Arctic, for example, it's darkness that really defines winter, in addition to wind and cold.

Jeff Stein: Presumably then, Boston, with a latitude of 42 degrees, qualifies as a winter city and New York, with a latitude of 40 degrees, does not?

Norman Pressman: Bostonians might be surprised to know that Boston doesn't technically qualify either. Boston has the same average January temperature as Berlin, Cleveland, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Reykjavik, and Zurich. They are really not considered winter cities, even though many winter cities do have similar freeze-and-thaw cycles over a period of several months. I don't think that you have at least one or two months of continuous snow cover. Most of the 100 or so places that constitute the major winter settlements of the world tend to agree with this definition. But there are characteristics that differentiate one city's winter from another. For example, Bodø, in the north of Norway, and Winnipeg are characterized by extreme wind chill. Sapporo and Aomori in Japan and Ottawa and Quebec City are characterized by heavy snowfalls. Fairbanks, Alaska, is characterized by ice fog; Copenhagen by cloud cover and a lot of it; Boston and Reykjavik by a lot of slush, because of the freeze-thaw cycles; Tromsø and Kiruna in northern Norway and Sweden, respectively, by darkness; Irkutsk, in Siberia, and Edmonton and Montreal by lengthy periods of cold temperatures. Many cities have a combination of all of these things.

> There's a wonderful Swedish folk expression: "There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing."
>
> *— Norman Pressman*

Jeff Stein: Given that level of complexity and variation, there can't possibly be a single recipe for urban design for winter.

Norman Pressman: I don't think there's a single recipe, any more than there's a single recipe for cooking a good meal, or for designing a good building in various localities with different building materials, different traditions, different lifestyles. But there are a lot of principles that are generally agreed upon. And once you have the design principles, you can adapt them to suit local conditions, and to satisfy what local inhabitants feel are high priorities.

Jeff Stein: There seem to be two opposite approaches to dealing with humans and nature. One of those is, don't over-protect us from nature; the other is, provide protection from whatever in nature is undesirable.

Norman Pressman: Those are the two extremes. In North America, there is a propensity toward over-protection: to build a lot of glazed-over projects; to build monstrously sized enclosed shopping malls; to build skywalks and pedestrian bridges and enclose the whole city center; or, alternatively, to build huge underground pedestrian networks connected to subway and metro systems. However, my Scandinavian colleagues feel differently: they believe it's OK to be exposed to nature and to nature's hardships. In fact, it's maybe even a good thing, as long as you don't have to be exposed for very lengthy periods of time. And if you dress properly, that's a big help as well. North Americans dress in fashionable summer garb all year round, then complain that it's cold in the winter. There's a wonderful Swedish folk expression: "There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing."

Jeff Stein: So the solution you've written about lies in living with the climate, not in spite of it.

Norman Pressman: I think that if you tremendously over-protect yourself, what you're really doing is eliminating the climate completely. There's a lot of discussion about whether or not that is desirable.

Jeff Stein: A few years ago, when oil was $20 a barrel, we thought that we could do this fairly easily. There were technical fixes in architecture and urban design that would allow us to protect ourselves, which all of a sudden don't seem quite so realistic anymore.

Norman Pressman: That's true. If you completely eliminate climate, you just end up with a kind of steady-state, thermally neutral environment, in which there is no

Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen (Svalbard Archipelago, Arctic Ocean).

variation at all. But that's an extreme. To not have any protection, of course, is the other extreme. We need to find a middle ground, depending on the relative severity of winter, and on what is considered acceptable from a cultural perspective.

Jeff Stein: In one of your books, a quote from planner and historian Frederick Gutheim says, "We've built broad piazzas and boulevards which have no place in Northern climes, and the design of Northern cities should be rooted in the forms of the North, not the Mediterranean. For cities have been well-designed for the cold, and they're often surpassingly lovely." Is density one of the issues for cities in cold climates?

Norman Pressman: Gutheim wrote that about 30 years ago and it's just as valid today. The most vulnerable inhabitant of a winter city is the pedestrian or public-transit user. If we can reduce the need to walk under very severe winter conditions, or if we can reduce the distances that must be walked, we will be less exposed to the hostilities of climate. And that, of course, implies mixed-use densification. Yet we have persisted in building low-density, segregated land-use communities. That is not only undesirable in terms of thermal comfort, but it's also not a very wise thing in terms of the number of roadways that have to be cleared by snowplows, the costs involved for emergency vehicles and for policing, and the tremendous distances that have to be traversed. So the good old relatively compact city, with a lot of mixed activity and land uses, is always a better winter city than the kinds of places we've been building in the US and Canada over the last 40 years.

Jeff Stein: Yet somehow commercial culture promotes that other model.

Norman Pressman: The developer's response is that it's not necessarily what's best for people, but it's what people want. Of course, no one has scientifically proven that everybody, even if they could afford it, would want to live in a single-family detached house with a two-car garage. But in any case, that's not a solution you can cover the globe with. What we're talking about is having a balance between contact with nature and the climate, a healthy social fabric, some degree of protection, and transit-supportive density in case gas prices really go through the roof or we experience shortages.

Jeff Stein: Climate includes a number of conditions in addition to temperature. Wind is certainly one of them. How do cities reconcile wind effects on climate with the demand to build towers? For instance, Bostonians have learned that towers seem to create huge wind turbulence for pedestrians. The Hancock tower is one well-known culprit.

Norman Pressman: Most of the major Scandinavian capitals, particularly Stockholm and Oslo, have been discouraging the building of high-rise towers for the last 10 to 15 years. They're recommending, in effect, taking that 20- or 30-story high-rise and laying it on its side. Whether a municipality is technically a winter city or not, the cities or local authorities can

Arcades (Marktgasse), Bern, Switzerland.

either request or demand, by bark or by bite, that the developers present project impact studies covering four areas in particular: snowdrift, shadow, wind, and solar access to public space and private space, such as residential backyards.

Jeff Stein: Could you say a few words about snowdrift impact studies?

Norman Pressman: They were first developed by microclimate engineers in Scandinavia and are now increasingly common in Canada, too — they're especially useful in areas where there's heavy snowfall and a lot of wind. They identify conditions where drifting will prevent access to places that are intensively used, such as main entrances to buildings, public plazas, roads, airport runways, driveways, and so on.

Jeff Stein: In Boston, we require some studies, but in times of economic trouble, we tend to forego them. The Hancock tower, to use it again as an example, casts a mighty shadow in the middle of winter over the Public Garden, one of the city's great outdoor amenities. Had it been built in ordinary economic times, that might not have been allowed to happen. But when the politics are such that we want to attract construction jobs to the city, we tend to take the short view of things.

Norman Pressman: If you subject development proposals to these kinds of impact studies, and if you bear in mind that they exist to make a better city — to make better, more thermally comfortable public spaces and parks — you need to bear in mind that there is a price to pay for ignoring them. But of course, the whole development industry involves a juggling of various interests and priorities and making a lot of compromises.

Still, in any city that experiences a less-than-ideal climate, it's imperative to extend the period of comfortable outdoor space. For example, the cities of Toronto, Montreal, Oslo, Stockholm, and Sapporo have similar climates in that people can be in outdoor space with relative comfort for roughly 18 weeks or four-and-a-half months of the year. By using microclimatic design techniques, which essentially capture as much sun as possible and eliminate as much wind and shadow as possible, you can extend that to a six-month comfortable outdoor season, an increase of 30 percent. For cities in the northern hemisphere that have really lengthy, harsh winters, like Helsinki, St. Petersburg, Ottawa, Moscow, Winnipeg, and Harbin, a 30-percent increase in outdoor usage is very significant. Some of these techniques, such as microclimatic landscape planning, are nothing new. They've always been part of good vernacular design, which we have been ignoring.

One thing that greatly improves the urban fabric of a city with a less-than-ideal climate is a system of arcades. We rarely build the kinds of arcades, gallerias, or passages that were commonplace in 19th-century Europe.

Jeff Stein: Boston has only a few arcades, but there is an informal system of passages downtown, mostly a series of through-block lobbies in office buildings. Unfortunately, it's like a secret handshake — you have to have lived and worked here for a while to discover and navigate them.

Norman Pressman: And they are interior, essentially private, spaces. Arcades, of course, can also contribute to street life. The entire city of Bern, the capital of Switzerland, is arcaded on both sides of every single street — almost six miles. It creates marvelous pedestrian-friendly environments for meeting, shopping, working. Arcades are another example of a traditional technique that can do a lot for the quality of life, as well as for the quality of design, in the modern winter city. Other fine examples can be found in Innsbruck, in Bolzano and Turin in Italy, as well as in several newly planned Scandinavian communities.

But other strategies really are new. For example, there's a new trend in northern Europe to expand the outdoor season for socializing and café-sitting, where outdoor cafés are installing lots of overhead or freestanding heaters. Many are even offering blankets, cushions, and sheepskins on armchairs. Little details like that can cumulatively have a very significant positive impact.

In any city that experiences a less-than-ideal climate, it's imperative to extend the period of comfortable outdoor space. — *Norman Pressman*

Jeff Stein: What are some microclimatic techniques that we have forgotten or ignored that capture sunlight or offer wind protection?

Norman Pressman: Avoiding very high buildings, which create a lot of wind-tunneling at the base on open plazas. Making sure that proposed designs create heat pockets and sun pockets, whether at a very small level or fairly large scale — regrettably, there are not many good examples of such techniques; there are far more bad examples. Using a lot of coniferous vegetation on the windward sides of buildings. The best example I know of at the regional scale is in Reykjavik. All the trees had been chopped down by the original settlers. But in the last half-dozen years, the regional masterplan for greater Reykjavik has called for planting thousands upon thousands of coniferous trees on the windward edge of the city, to act as a break for its very harsh winds, so people in downtown Reykjavik will have almost no experience of wind at all. This strategy also halts erosion and provides needed recreational parkland. They poetically call this landscape plan "the Green Scarf." A lot of other cities could learn from their example.

Jeff Stein: While we're on the subject of green — color can also play a role in making cities more livable in wintertime.

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Norman Pressman: That's another thing that we don't have many good examples of. Most of the best examples involving the use of color are in small sub-Arctic communities in Scandinavia. But there are interesting exceptions. Longyearbyen, a town on the island of Spitsbergen, is the only community, to my knowledge, that has implemented a color masterplan. Everybody has to select from the official palette before repainting a house or building a new building.

Jeff Stein: Is it a broad palette, or is it bright?

Norman Pressman: It was actually developed by an interior designer who is also a color expert. The colors work in harmony with all the colors you see in nature in each of the seasons. It's primarily a pastel palette, but includes some of the intense, brilliant hues that you see in nature. The city of Nuuk — the capital of Greenland — is now working with color palettes as well.

Jeff Stein: Color might help alleviate a health-related issue: seasonal affective disorder resulting from the loss of sunlight.

Norman Pressman: With light deprivation, people require more stimuli or they will get depressed, particularly in the northern latitudes where it's really very dark. They can get some of that from color, but they also need to get it from social interaction. That may sometimes mean going out when you otherwise might not want to go out. So public transit is critical.

A lot of Scandinavian cities have introduced heated bus shelters in the last five to 10 years, so that it's much easier to move about without a car. The city of Luleå, Sweden, way up in the North where the sun barely rises above the horizon in winter, has introduced wood-burning fireplaces on its main pedestrian shopping street in the city center, in addition to a lot of very beautiful ice and snow sculptures. And they're using more and more color on building façades. Many Northern cities are taking advantage of geothermal energy to heat streets and sidewalks: Luleå has dry, non-slip surfaces where people can walk adjacent to the building façades. And you can use cross-country skis in the center section of their pedestrian mall, if you like. The city of Oslo has more than 2,000 kilometers of cross-country ski trails throughout the entire metropolitan region, more than 200 of them illuminated for nighttime skiing.

Jeff Stein: These are cultures that introduce children to cross-country skis at a very early age.

Norman Pressman: Yes, that's particularly true in Norway. It's ingrained in the culture, but it's also ensured by the educational system. The Japanese in Hokkaido, particularly in greater Sapporo, are learning from them; they now have learn-to-ski programs for children.

Jeff Stein: We think that skiing is fun — it's a sport. Yet if the ground is covered with snow, it's the best way to get around.

Norman Pressman: It's also a way to enjoy winter. Because if you don't participate in winter sports, such as skiing or hockey or skating or ice fishing, you end up hibernating for much of the time. But it's worth remembering that winter is also a season that is often filled with a frenzy of formalized indoor activity, like dinner parties, symphony, ballet, theater, opera. That is actually a valuable tradition in terms of encouraging social interaction. And of course, both approaches are blended in winter carnivals, which are becoming more and more popular, as best exemplified in Sapporo and Quebec City.

Jeff Stein: Boston's First Night is a winter carnival of sorts, albeit a very short one. But it does show that you can draw hundreds of thousands of people into the city on a really chilly winter evening. And that's an interesting phenomenon because Boston, and New England generally, is losing population to other regions. The common complaint of people who are leaving is that the climate is so bad. They're going somewhere where the weather is milder. I suspect that the problem isn't really the climate, but that we fail to design our cities and build our buildings to help us deal with that climate.

> If our Northern cities were more climate-responsive, it is very possible that we could begin to stem the outflux of people into the Sun Belt.
>
> — *Norman Pressman*

Norman Pressman: If our Northern cities were more climate-responsive — if they were safer, more beautiful, more dynamic than they currently are — it is very possible that we could begin to stem that outflux of people into the Sun Belt. But this brings us back to the first thing we talked about — the fact that winter is a relative notion. From my perspective, living in Waterloo, Ontario, I would say that Boston doesn't have much of a winter to begin with. It really is relative. If people are running away because they want palm trees, there's not much you can do. But if they simply want to live in an environment that makes life easier and more pleasant, there's a lot that we can learn from older European cities in regions that get some winter. I suspect that the winters in Fribourg or Bern or Turin are quite similar to winter in Boston. But the urban fabric there is really very welcoming. Our cities in winter really aren't all that welcoming, especially if you don't have a car. Even in Canada, we don't have any

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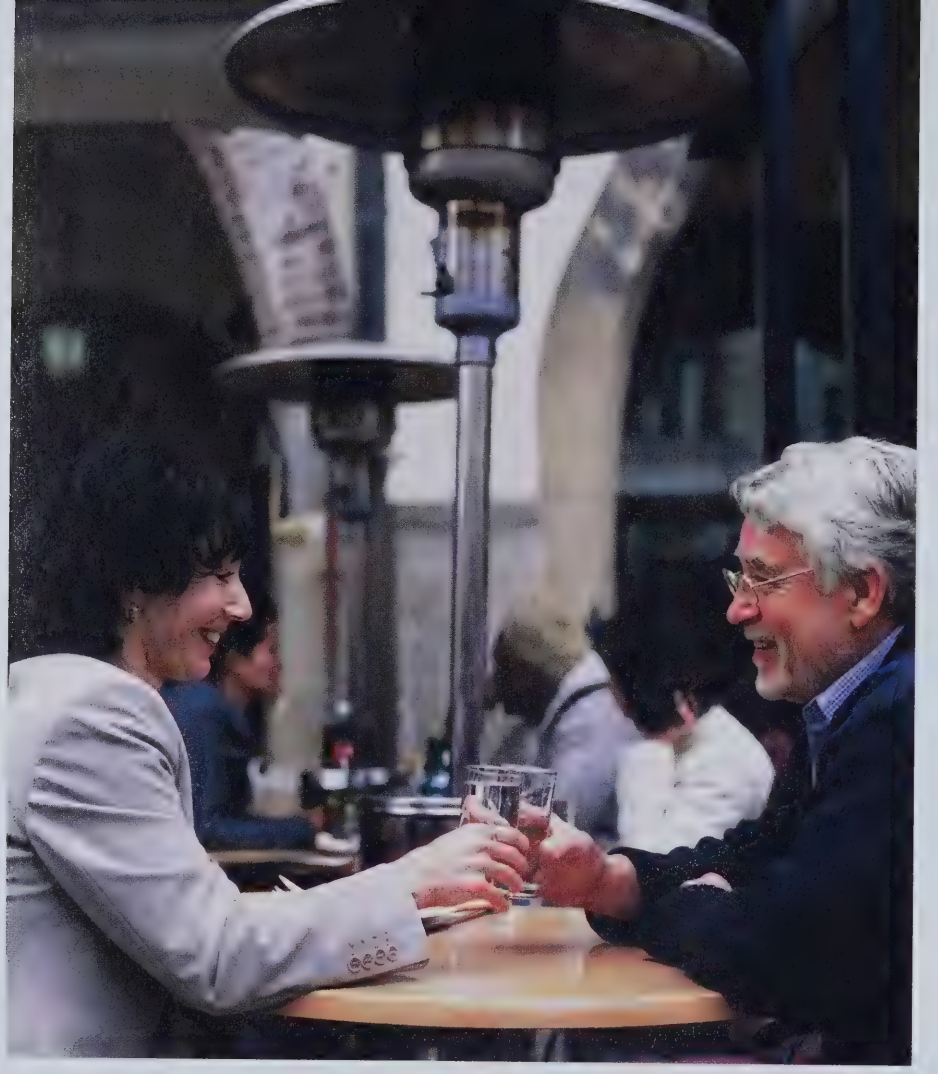

Outdoor café with heaters and cushioned seats, Prague.

A good winter city has to protect its inhabitants from negative aspects of winter and expose them to winter's positive realm. — *Norman Pressman*

examples anywhere of heated bus shelters. And even well-designed bus shelters are the exception.

Jeff Stein: And then the waiting time between buses, even in a heated bus shelter, is a problem.

Norman Pressman: There are some communities in northern Finland that actually put on more buses in the winter, so that the waiting time is reduced. You get a higher frequency of service in the winter and a lower frequency of service in the summer. That's a very interesting response to managing public transit. It's not a design issue but a management issue.

The North American response to winter, when there is one, seems to turn first to skywalks. St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Calgary are almost completely covered. They give a very good level of protection but, of course, they're competing with the streets themselves.

Jeff Stein: Boston has just a couple of skywalks, but they are discouraged for that very reason — they take people off the street.

Norman Pressman: Even the city of Montreal, in its latest revised masterplan, decided not to extend its underground pedestrian city, because it was sucking too much life away from the streets. It's very interesting to remember that these above-ground pedestrian skywalks, which generally started in the 1970s, were never built solely for climatic protection. At that time, it was an urban-planning doctrine to separate pedestrians and vehicles. Traffic engineers believed that pedestrians were an impediment to the free flow of car traffic. Then there was the great fear that the downtown sidewalks could never handle the volume of pedestrian traffic generated by the development of high-rise office buildings. They had to put the pedestrians somewhere else. If you want to get pedestrians out of the way, then you either have to put them above ground or below ground. Today it's fashionable to justify skywalks in terms of climate protection.

Jeff Stein: Is the talk about climate today part of a second generation of urban design? Urban design as a discipline had its beginnings a generation or more ago, and seemed to focus on a certain kind of classicism. Now, in the fullness of time, is it becoming a more nuanced, more complex discipline?

Norman Pressman: Yes, I think so. It has to be very inclusive. We've learned we need to factor in much more than we once did. Maybe, as Ralph Erskine — the British architect who practiced in Sweden — taught, we need to create an "architectural grammar" for the North. The classical urban-design grammar isn't quite sufficient. We want to provide prototypes for good Northern urban design that can be emulated.

The ideal winter city has never been built, but fragments of the ideal exist in many different cities. A good winter city has to protect its inhabitants from negative aspects of winter and expose them to winter's positive realm. There is a lot we can do. We can change our attitudes and we can change our behavior. And I think design has a very important role to play. Everyone at some point becomes a pedestrian — you get out of your car, or you get off the bus, or you get off the subway. What happens if that is a challenge? You are vulnerable. The winter city has to accommodate the needs of the most vulnerable groups in society: the children, elderly, physically challenged, economically disadvantaged, cyclists, transit users, homeless people. If they're accommodated, everybody else will be doing just fine. ■

Dressing for the Weather:
Climate Matters in the Orkneys

By Duncan Pendlebury AIA

It is a land where Vikings left their tales of love and heroism in rune-chiseled stories while they over-wintered in Neolithic tombs. It is a land where every day is spent dealing with a climate driven by constant wind blowing from the west, pushing the North Atlantic into the North Sea through the Scapa Flow. The Orkneys lie two honest hours of wild ferry rides north of the Scottish mainland, a collection of sheep-dotted islands, large and small, inhabited and barren.

My friends in the Orkneys (they call themselves "Orcadians") remark that the never-ending wind — standing on the west coast facing the North Atlantic requires a constant 30-degree lean — and the driving rain that is always pelting your face or threatening to do so, creates a very visible horizontal social structure. Everyone is dressed against the weather. I hadn't thought much about the effects of the climate on outward social appearance, but then I remembered the arrival at Stromness, the port on the main island. I was probably too glad to have feet on solid ground and too sleepy from the overdose of sea-sick pills to notice that just about every Orcadian greeter on the quay stood in loose rubber boots, tweed hat pulled tight against the building breeze and hands thrust into the pockets of a blue, brown, green, or black all-weather jacket. Our climate in New England allows for so much more variety and expression — except for those nor'easters when we all don the dark overcoat and put head to the wind.

At John O' Groats, located at the most northeastern corner of the Scottish mainland, palm trees grow wild. But if you want to grow apples only two hours to the north, where the islands' fields slope slowly to the North Atlantic, you have to build a wind-deflector wall first. If you simply want to grow some flowers and sit on your patio, you still build a deflector wall.

View of Hoy, Orkney, from the P&O ferry.

The original Orcadians were hunters and fishermen who built round and oval stone houses below ground, connected by stone-roofed alleyways, each with an internal latrine alcove connected to a central underground sewage trench — 5,000 years ago! They didn't want to go out in the weather, either. The ruins of their houses, tombs, and "stone circles" are everywhere in the Orkneys and incredibly accessible. You can crawl, without a guide, a docent, or a guard, as much as your bulky rain gear allows, into Maes Howe, a large community tomb, which 3,800 years later served as a winter shelter for Vikings as they started raiding the British Isles from their base in Norway — a 24-hour sail away.

Because of the Gulf Stream, winters in the Orkneys are surprisingly mild, although they are long, dark, windy, and wet. The unusual climate has recently generated countless alternative energy start-ups, mostly focused on wind generators and tidal generators. Energy codes are strict, although a few Orcadians still live in traditional stone-walled and stone-roofed farmhouses and heat with peat. Insulating materials and even window sizes are regulated; asphalt roof shingles are prohibited because winter winds sometimes blow at 135 mph. Rooms are small whether the house is old or new, built for coziness and heat preservation. (My Orcadian friends covet our open-plan houses.)

Dress for the weather? Orcadians can show you how an entire society is shaped by the weather. ■

Duncan Pendlebury AIA is president of TRO Jung|Brannen in Boston.

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This large barn structure, designed by LSC Design Inc., was then capped with 42,000 sq. ft. of Charcoal SNAP-CLAD Panels, complete with two 30 foot cupolas topped with a 7 foot weathervane in the shape of a bear. This 4-story building serves as a retail store for Boyds Bear Collectibles, houses their corporate offices, a museum and a food court to accommodate large bus tours.

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Cool Thinking

We can't change the climate, but we can change our attitude — and, with a few good ideas, we can make winter in Boston less difficult, maybe even pleasurable. *ArchitectureBoston* asked readers how they would improve winter in the city.

Urban Hookah >

Moskow Architects

We recently considered the plight of folks who smoke in the winter. Smokers are really the current pariahs of society — you have undoubtedly seen them huddled in doorways shivering and puffing. Our Urban Hookah addresses their needs (and the needs of those who do not like to enter a building through a cloud of smoke), providing warmth and shelter.

Bridges to Warmth

David Roberts PE

Even the hardiest of Bostonians cringes at the thought of crossing one of our many bridges (Northern Avenue, Congress, Summer Street, or any of the bridges crossing the Charles River) in the months of December through March, when the bitter winds can penetrate all that L.L. Bean has to offer.

The solution? Install 10-to-15-foot-high Plexiglas (we still want to keep the view) wind barriers on each side of the bridge with overhead gas-fired radiant heaters. These provide both a brief respite from the cold (radiant heat warms the objects, not air) as well as sidewalk snowmelting. The cost of the project would be small enough to be easily buried deep within a Big Dig change-order (who'd know?!).

Hygge

Adam Jacobi

A word that exists in Denmark (and most likely all of Scandinavia) is *hygge*. *Hygge* is loosely defined as comfort/coziness/warmth. It is a way to live and cope with long dark nights and never-ending snow. It's not an object or event — it's an attitude. The website Linkdenmark.com offers a definition: "It doesn't translate directly into any other language but we can illustrate it in action: Gather the family and invite over your closest friends. Push the sofas and chairs up close to the coffee table. Turn off the lights and light some candles. Better still, light a fire in the hearth, serve plenty of good food and drink, raise your glass and make a toast or two, or three, and feel the warmth flow around the table. Smile at each other until you see the candlelight shimmering in each other's eyes. You've got *hygge*!"

Whatever it is, Boston could use some.

< Light Rooms

designLAB architects

We propose the distribution of "light rooms" throughout Boston to provide communal respite from the darkness of winter. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a condition that affects over 10 million Americans, with the highest incidence in northern latitudes. Researchers believe that therapy using bright light can lift depression or reset a sleep cycle.

The light rooms would be constructed of translucent polycarbonate panels enclosing simple benches for up to 12 people. A full-spectrum 10,000-lux light source will bounce light off one opaque wall, simultaneously flooding the interior with light and creating a glowing neighborhood beacon. Funding for the construction of the light rooms would be provided by corporate sponsors and credited on the luminous surface of each light room.

Hot Arcs

Pamela de Oliveira-Smith

Imagine arching heating elements installed along the downtown sidewalks — including the Public Garden and the Common. Think of them as open tunnels that glow white (or, a nod to Christo, saffron) but are not a solid structure. Viewed together, they would look more like a Slinky. The effect would be warming and glowing. The rods would be about 7.5 feet tall and just wide enough to line the walks.

On one special day, let any child dance in *The Nutcracker.*

— Diane Georgopulos FAIA

A Winter Cornucopia

Diane Georgopulos FAIA

- **I'd suggest some kind of competition for the holiday tree-lighting on the Common instead of the limp strings of bulbs that get hung every year. The shops on Newbury Street (Armani, DKNY, Brooks Brothers) could each sponsor a tree to be designed by one of their store or window-display designers. On First Night, Bostonians could vote for their favorite tree.**
- **Taking a page out of Providence's WaterFire evenings, imagine a Fire-and-Ice walk along the Rose Kennedy Greenway, where large-scale ice sculptures interspersed with braziers would illuminate a romantic walk. Have stops along the way where small choirs could sing — Boston has an unbelievably large number of choruses. Hot chocolate, hot cider, and fleece earmuffs could be sold by vendors under heaters.**
- **On one special day, let any child dance in *The Nutcracker.***
- **Like the Asian festivals where lanterns are floated to commemorate the dead, establish a date when Bostonians can buy little biodegradable lanterns or candles to set in the water at Long Wharf and watch as they float out to sea taking our troubles away.**

Pedestrian Corridors

Mark Lewis, Assoc. AIA

When I worked downtown, I used to always try to find a way to get from one place to another by spending as little time outdoors as possible on those bitter cold days. That meant traversing building lobbies, atriums, arcades, overhangs, and subway connection corridors (Downtown Crossing from Park Street, for example).

I always thought it would be great to have a route that people could travel in the winter that could keep them sheltered. Let's have a series of sheltered outdoor pedestrian corridors that could move people through the city. A great opportunity now exists to do such a thing on the Greenway.

True Grit

Tim Love AIA

Winter in Boston would be just fine if the amount of sand built up as a result of salting and sanding the streets could be addressed. As a South Boston resident, I can report that Southie is "serviced" disproportionately by the salting trucks (thanks to all of the politicians and city workers who live in the neighborhood). The crux of the problem is that there is so much sand in the mix that the grit has climbed seven feet up the side of my rowhouse by March. In addition, there is constant dust in the air and grit on the floors. This condition has a much bigger impact on my mood than snow, wind, or cold weather. Northern European cities such as Berlin, Copenhagen, and Munich have no sand-grit in the winter months (presumably due to the application of environmentally friendly chemicals). The City of Boston recently hired a new director of public works from Denver. Is this our chance for snow-removal reform? I am hopeful, since, while I have never been to Denver, I imagine that it (as a shining new Western city) has impeccable Munich-quality snow-removal techniques. If sand can be eliminated, the entire culture of this city will change: a Copenhagen/Munich-like blossoming of winter culture. (Unfortunately, Berlin, where the sun is hidden behind a wool blanket of clouds for the entire winter, is just too depressing — even with its clean streets.)

Snow Shine

R. Vickie Alani

I would love to see flush in-sidewalk uplighting — especially in the no-shovel zones. In the fall, summer, and spring, we would get lots of glow, but in the winter, the piles of snow would shine! The bigger the pile, the more awesome the sight. We would dread the shovelers digging out the bright landscape. A certain turn of emotions.

Boston's Diamond Necklace

Raymond Gonzalez

The best way to experience a winter day is from a warm interior. Boston's Diamond Necklace would be a series of steel-and-glass winter gardens connected by existing concourses, new public thoroughfares, and the T system. Each structure could serve as a gathering place and work as part of a system of interior spaces to make getting around the city in winter easier. (And when the weather permits, the structures would be open to the elements.)

Hearths >

Jim Sandell AIA

My family's antidote to cold New England winters is a warm fire. When we recently renovated our home, we included a cooking fireplace built at counter height next to the stove at the heart of the kitchen. Banquette seating for dining and gathering, an island for food prep, and an Umbrian hood impart an Italian style that recalls our many years of living in Italy.

The pungent smell of wood smoke, hot embers cooking sausages, or a roast slowly cooking on a built-in rotisserie makes meals a special time for the family. Starting each day with a fire that continues to warm the hearth throughout the day helps keep winter at bay.

A fire that continues to warm the hearth throughout the day helps keep winter at bay. — *Jim Sandell AIA*

Sing!

Kathy Gips

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< Ice Lanterns

Peter Vanderwarker

Ice lantern specs:

1. Fill balloons with water (16" diameter, round, party balloons, available at iParty).
2. Place each balloon on a plastic plate, for support. (I recommend Heller, designed by Massimo Vignelli.)
3. Keep the plate dry, so the lantern does not freeze to it.
4. Freeze at 25 degrees or lower for about 18 hours. Keep away from sun.
5. If you hang the balloon from above, you will get a taller lantern.

Next day:

6. Cut balloon and remove with some hot water.
7. Punch bottom of lantern with a knife to let water out.
8. Place a lit votive candle inside.
9. If you need to make a chimney, use drops of boiling water.
10. Call your friends over. Serve them chilled beer.
11. Fill balloons with water (16" diameter, round, party balloons, available at iParty).
12. Repeat.

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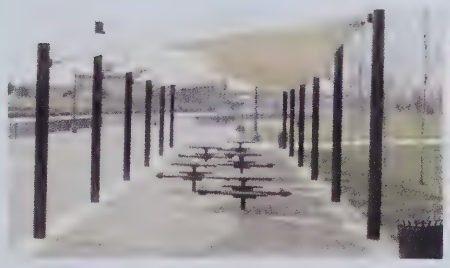

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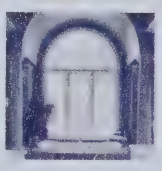

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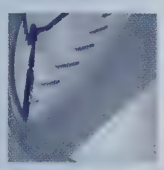

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The Architecture of WINTER

Building Against the Season

By Matthew Bronski, Assoc. AIA

"...it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair..." So wrote Charles Dickens in 1859, in what has become one of the best-known opening sentences in all of English literature. The connection of winter to darkness and despair persists throughout centuries of literature and the arts.

Over the last half century, and most acutely in the last two decades, architecture has endured its own season of darkness: the loss of a collective understanding of what it means to design in response to our climate, rather than in spite of it. Mesmerized by the promise of technology, architects have abandoned centuries-old principles. In doing so, they have turned their backs on a robust design sensibility that has evolved across cultures and regions in order to address not only the physical challenges of the winter season, but also its spiritual and emotional challenges.

Antidotes for the Spirit

Across many cultures and periods, light and color are used as an emotional antidote to the season of darkness. The onion shape of the domes of Russian Orthodox churches, for example, though derived from Byzantine architecture, addresses both pragmatic needs and emotional challenges of the harsh winter climate. The onion-shaped domes shed snow clear of the underlying walls, while the lower curve of the domes, often brightly painted or gilded, reflects and makes manifest the low sun during the short winter days.

Color has played an important role in responses to winter across Northern Europe. Many traditional timber buildings in Scandinavia and Bohemia include exuberantly painted and decorated interiors to brighten the long winter months spent largely inside. Similar approaches have been used on Scandinavian exteriors. As the historian Riitta Nikula relates, Finnish wooden buildings were generally either left unpainted or painted red (to imitate brick) through the 18th century. In 1803, however, King Gustavus IV Adolphus sent a letter to some towns urging the inhabitants to paint their houses yellow rather than red, as yellow was the most appropriate and happiest color.

Taking the opposite tack is the work of modern master Alvar Aalto and his first wife, Aino, on their own house in Helsinki (1935–1936). Aalto's composition of white-and-brown vertical boards and white-painted brick reminds us of the stark beauty of the winter landscape — as others have noted, the house embodies the silence and austerity of a Finnish birch forest in the snow. In 1936, the identity and spirit of the young nation (Finland gained independence in 1917) were deeply rooted in its landscape. The Aalto House, like the orchestral works of composer Jean Sibelius, embodies this landscape and resonates in a profound way with the Finnish spirit.

FROM *PLAIN MODERN: THE ARCHITECTURE OF BRIAN MACKAY-LYONS* (2005). COURTESY, PRINCETON ARCHITECTURAL PRESS

Howard House, Nova Scotia, 1995–1999. MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects.

Chalets, Switzerland.

Stave church, Norway.

The Pragmatic Lessons

Northern European vernacular buildings offer simple but enduring technical and pragmatic lessons for winter design. Scandinavian log construction — whether oriented vertically, as in Norwegian stave churches, or stacked horizontally, as in Norwegian and Finnish farm storehouse buildings and lofts — takes advantage of a locally abundant material that provides good insulation. Deep overhangs at roofs (and overhanging upper stories on lofts) shelter walls from snow and leakage. Entrances located on gable ends avoid the hazards of ice and snow sliding off roofs. In Scandinavian examples, as well as in Russian wood churches, raised, covered entrances protect doors from being blocked by snowdrifts. Some early Scandinavian farm buildings in areas of relatively less severe snowfall have low-slope roofs that add insulation by accumulating snow in the winter. More commonly, in areas of heavier snowfall, steeply sloped roofs shed snow and prevent structural collapse.

American vernacular buildings include some similar responses but use the materials and technology of their own place and time. In the latter 19th century, manufactured metal roofing became widely available and affordable. It became the roofing of choice on vernacular buildings in the Adirondacks and other northern snow-bound regions, as the slickness of the metal encourages snow slide-off to prevent structural failure. The most successful vernacular designs in the Adirondacks include steeply sloped metal roofs, without valleys or dormers, to most effectively shed snow.

The Symbolic Fire

In some cases, pragmatic and symbolic responses to winter are intertwined in the American vernacular.

In early- to- mid-18th-century America, Southern houses typically had fireplaces located on end walls to throw the heat to the exterior during hot summers, while New England houses had a massive central chimney to retain as much heat as possible. The hearth was not only the physical, but also the symbolic and social center of the 18th-century New England house. Architectural observation of the social importance of the fire was far from new, even in the 18th century. Over 1,500 years earlier, Vitruvius had written that it was fire that originally brought man together for social interaction.

Northern European vernacular buildings offer simple but enduring technical and pragmatic lessons for winter design.

Integrating the Lessons

Although the fireplace was no longer the source of heat by the early 20th century, Frank Lloyd Wright understood the role of the hearth in social interaction. Referring to his Usonian houses (his attempt to create affordable, well-designed, truly American dwellings), Wright wrote that we could "never make the living room big enough, the fireplace important enough." In many Usonians, his interior color palette of warm red, orange, or golden tones further emphasized the symbolic warmth of the hearth.

Part of a subset of late 19th- and early 20th-century architects who were influenced and inspired by the vernacular, Wright is a pre-eminent example of an architect who clearly understood the importance of designing for winter. He learned the vernacular lessons, took advantage of traditional materials where they made sense but embraced new technology where appropriate, and integrated these lessons to execute highly original works in his own vocabulary.

Wright's responses to winter ranged from the symbolic and emotional to the technical and pragmatic. He wrote that snow

Aalto House, Helsinki, 1935–1936. Alvar and Aino Aalto.

Zimmerman House (before recent renovation), Manchester, New Hampshire, 1950. Frank Lloyd Wright.

was the best insulation, and designed low-slope roofs that retain the snow, with immense roof overhangs that shelter the walls. Incorporating appropriate technology, his radiant floor heating schemes provided better heat distribution and human comfort than more commonly used radiators or air ducts. And consideration of the winter climate often helped shape the overall form of Wright's houses. Many of Wright's Northern houses, like the Zimmerman House in Manchester, New Hampshire, rebuffed the north wind with a mostly solid wall, and opened to the south with large expanses of glass and a deep roof overhang to shade the glazing in summer, while allowing the low winter sun to warm the interior masonry.

Wright's second house for the Jacobs family in Wisconsin, a "solar hemicycle" (so called because of its C-shaped plan), mounds an earthen berm against a solid masonry wall to the north, with a curved glass wall to the south to capture the low winter sun. Wright's use of the berm to stabilize seasonal temperatures had much precedent. For centuries, burrowing into the earth has been a way to mitigate extreme temperatures at many latitudes, as Thoreau reminded us in *Walden* when he described digging his root cellar into the south slope of a hill. (The many forms of earth-sheltered dwellings in China support Thoreau's contention.) While Wright's buildings clearly have their share of technical problems (roof overhangs that sag and leak, radiant floor heating pipes that rust and destroy their concrete floors), these problems are easily solved in new design, and Wright's broader lessons of designing for winter are still relevant today.

The Winter of Despair

Sadly, the accumulated lessons of Wright and the vernacular in designing for winter are frequently forgotten. The profession of architecture seems to be suffering from a collective amnesia for even some of the simplest lessons.

At an international building-durability conference last year in Europe, a Finnish researcher described an epidemic of wood-wall leakage and deterioration problems in Finland as recent residential designs have forgotten the simple vernacular wisdom that sloped roofs should overhang walls. Too often today, architects conceive buildings with little regard for their winter climate, instead expecting that better materials and technology (such as membranes, air barriers, sealants, insulation, and insulating glass) make any design and building form viable. In cold climates, immense skylights in a high-humidity environment (like a museum or natatorium) are a potentially problematic proposition, but they seem to be the rule rather than the exception in recent new designs. Too many designers assume that an expensive skylight and insulating glass are all that are needed to prevent condensation and related problems — and too often they are wrong. Today's improved materials and construction technology should be used to support and enhance a fundamentally sound design, rather than to attempt to compensate for a fundamentally problematic one.

Today's improved materials and construction technology should be used to support and enhance a fundamentally sound design.

The overall forms of many prominent new buildings seem conceived in spite of winter, rather than in concert with it. The glass box continues to appear frequently in Northern climates, often justified on the grounds of being "aesthetically contemporary" (although it is difficult to believe that claim more than a half century after the Farnsworth House and the Lever House). As a building form, the colossal bridge at Harvard's One Western Avenue is the antithesis of Wright's hemicycle: Rather than using the building's form to naturally mitigate winter cold,

Agnew House, Nova Scotia, 1996–1998.
MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects.

the bridge form dictates that no surface will be tempered by the warmer ground; moreover, the underside of the bridge will lose heat to the colder winter air. Technology (air barriers, insulation, and heating systems) will need to compensate. Sert's Peabody Terrace, directly across the river, offered a beautiful lesson and a far more logical response for a large dormitory on the Charles River. While a few buildings are turned to create well-proportioned and humanly scaled outdoor spaces, most of Sert's buildings present a concrete wall to the north, with large areas of glazing to the east and west. The mostly glazed walls to the west offer river views, and are warmed by the winter sun, yet shielded from excessive summer heat gain by balconies and louvers.

The Spring of Hope

Hope is not lost. Some contemporary architects are designing for winter in thoughtful ways that do not ignore centuries of accumulated wisdom and experience, but integrate and express these lessons in buildings that are of their own place and time, and that have their own authenticity.

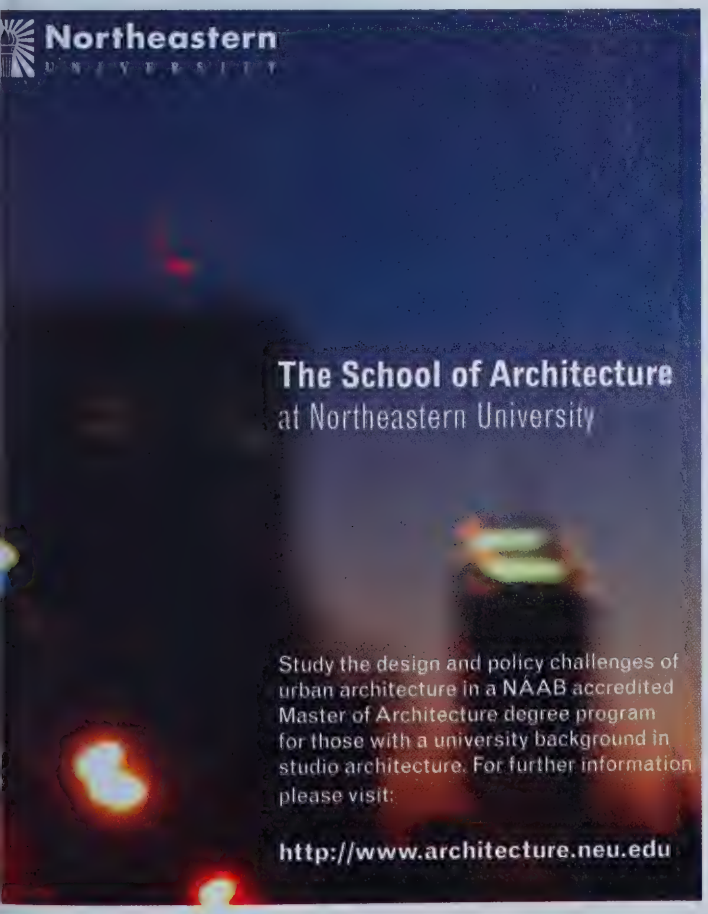
Ė-House, Michael McDonough's much-publicized, environmentally progressive house project in the Hudson River Valley, is a recent example. Although the house relies very heavily on computer technology — perhaps too heavily — it also recognizes and incorporates time-proven, low-tech responses to winter. The overall form

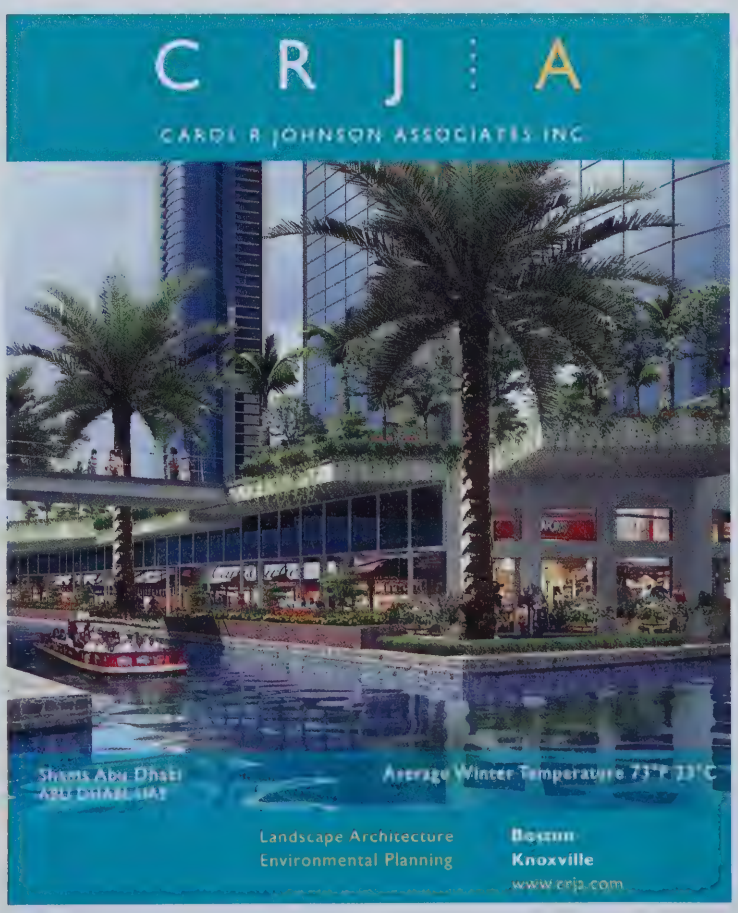
and orientation of the house are partly shaped by the climate and the sun. The fireplace design is based on a traditional Rumford radiant firebox, and anchors the great room as a social gathering place. A bread oven adds emotional comfort, and a bit of heat, in winter. The house includes radiant floor heating, a classic Wright solution in cold climates. While the appearance of the house isn't the least bit Wrightian, McDonough was so influenced by his responses to winter that he declared Wright the patron saint of e-House.

MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects, based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, has designed a series of contemporary houses and cottages along the Nova Scotia coast that are richer because they are informed and shaped by their harsh climate. The Agnew House — on a cove on the Atlantic coast — has a steeply sloped roof with massive overhangs. The house employs the time-tested vernacular precedent, but reinterprets it, using the massive roof overhang and perpendicular supporting walls to define outdoor space. The Danielson Cottage, designed for a meteorologist and a landscape architect, sits isolated on the edge of a cliff on the tip of Cape Breton Island. On precious, warm, clear days, the cottage walls open to the outside, affording views to Newfoundland. A gleaming metal roof wraps over the top of the house and down two walls, like a fisherman's rain hat with the ear flaps turned down — a reminder that storms can roll in quickly and unexpectedly even on the sunniest days. During inclement weather, the house closes in upon itself, battens down the hatches, and waits for the storms to pass. The architects' consideration of climate and place has enriched, rather than hindered, the overall form, originality, and authenticity of their buildings.

For many others who fail to adequately consider winter climate in their design, it is all too easy to fall into the construction technology trap. The more we conceive buildings with little regard for their climate, and the more heavily we rely on construction technology to overcome inherent incompatibilities between the building's design and its climate, the more finicky and prone to failure our building envelopes become. The frequent lack of adequate consideration of climate marks the "winter of despair" in current design. This disconnect from place-based, climate-based design merits widespread rethinking, particularly as we now face the "period of consequences" of the global climate crisis. But, as Percy Shelley asked, "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" Hope is on the horizon; the interest of a few in learning the lessons of the vernacular, and the laudable interest of many in green buildings and sustainability, may renew more widespread emphasis across the architectural profession on buildings that better suit their respective climates. As that happens, a new architecture of winter will emerge, and the built and natural environments and the architectural profession will all be the better for it. ■

Matthew Bronski, Assoc. AIA, is an engineer/designer at Simpson Gumpertz & Heger in Waltham, Massachusetts. He co-chairs the BSA Historic Resources Committee.





The Snow Show

The art and architecture of very, very cold water

Chances are, you built snowmen when you were a kid. (Maybe you still do.) If so, you probably have an intuitive sense of the materiality of snow: Wet snow compacts better than the dry, fluffy stuff. Snow is surprisingly variable in color and texture. It's also surprisingly variable in its hardness. Structurally, snow works pretty well in compression and is lousy in tension. Pouring water over snow will either melt it or glaze it, depending on temperature and quantity. Snow is ephemeral.

Lance Fung, a New York-based independent curator, is intrigued by the material qualities of snow, just as he has long been intrigued by the nature of creative collaboration. In 2003 and 2004, he brought both interests together in the first Snow Show, held in Lapland, Finland; the most recent exhibition was held last February and March in Sestriere, Italy, in conjunction with the Winter Olympics. Pairing artists and architects, Fung deliberately explores the juxtaposition of architectural theory and fine art through a medium that encourages public participation. The Snow Show is at once intellectual exercise and sheer spectacle: It's hard to imagine anything more technically impressive and yet wonderfully goofy than an installation called *Caress Zaha with Vodka/Icefire*—in which the artist Cai Gio-Quang poured vodka over a cantilevered ice structure constructed by collaborator Zaha Hadid and set it alight, fluid fire coursing over ice—"provoking joy," in Hadid's words.

The photographs that follow document the Snow Show installations that otherwise have no further presence. Although these installations are far more abstract than their more familiar snow-sculpture kin at winter festivals such as Sapporo, Harbin, and Boston's First Night, they represent ideas that are much more likely to influence the way we build. Fung notes that snow is a neutral material; neither the architects nor the artists participating in his project had previous experience with snow construction. Viewers likewise bring little experience of snow-and-ice buildings, and so these images become intriguing suggestions of new ways of making space.

Most striking are the effects of transparency, translucency, and opacity. Manipulating light and color, giving their work dual presence by night and day, the teams hint at an entire new realm of building materials that transcend the solids and voids of traditional materials such as masonry and glass. Neither solid nor void, these snow and ice constructions are something in between.

These are the qualities that make the Snow Show installations so much more provocative than similarly ephemeral seasonal structures, sandcastles. Neutral and abstract, they are also scaleless. Look at these structures and imagine walls, rooms, buildings, and cities.

—*Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA*

The Snow Show has been documented in the book *The Snow Show* (Thames & Hudson, 2005), edited by Lance Fung, with essays by the participants. Additional images can be seen at www.thesnowshow.com.

Left: ***Fluid Fossils*, Do-ho Suh and Morphosis, 2004**

Where Are You?, Jaume Plensa and Norman Foster, 2006

Looking Glass, Kiki Smith and Lebbeus Woods, 2006

Right: *Oblong Voidspace*, Jene Highstein and Steven Holl, 2003

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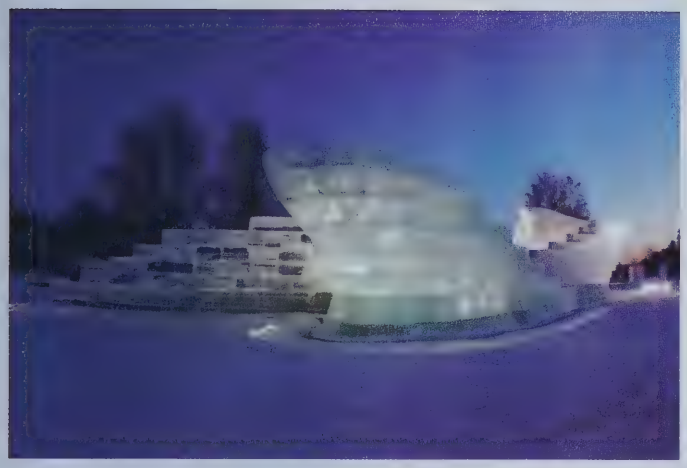
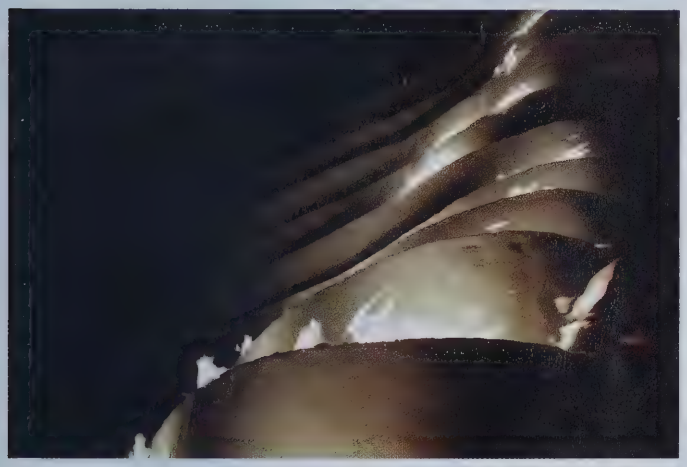
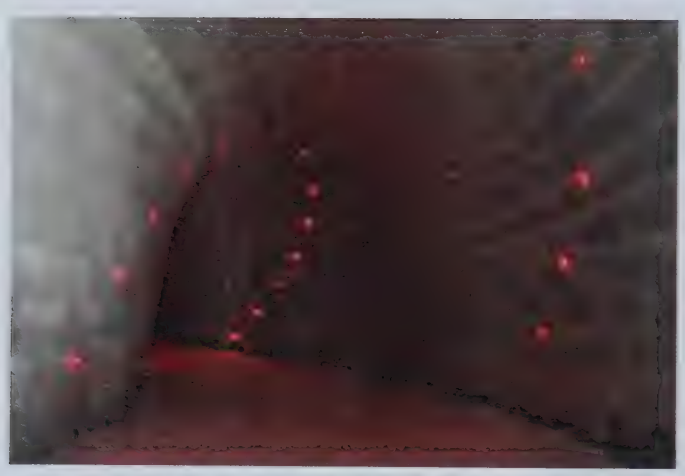




Caress Zaha with Vodka/Icefire, Cai Gio-Quang and Zaha Hadid, 2004

Coloured Ice Walls, Top Changtrakul and LOT-EK, 2004

Left: *Lanterns of Ursa Minor,* Robert Barry and Hollmén-Reuter-Sandman, 2004



ced Time Tunnel. Tatsuo Miyajima and Tadao Ando. 2004

Untitled. Paola Pivi and Cliostraat. 2006

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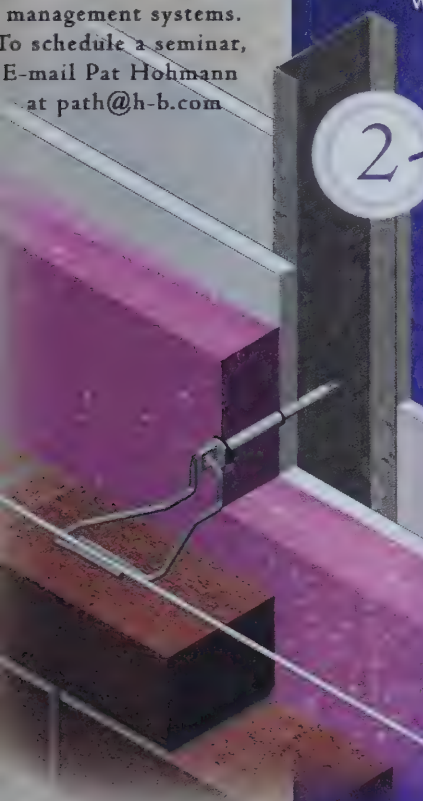

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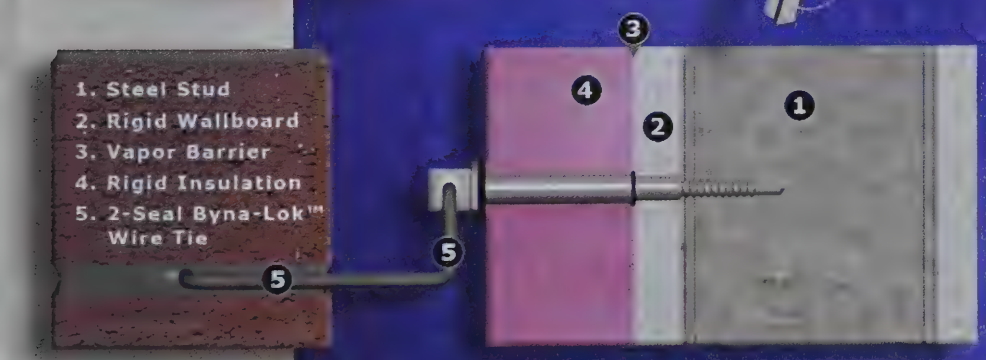

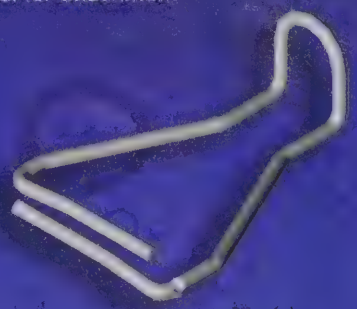

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Winterscapes

Shaping our views of Northern cities

By Justin Crane, Assoc. AIA

Boston has, by tradition, refused to enjoy winter. From 1659 to 1681, its Puritan government outlawed the celebration of Christmas, and anyone showing holiday spirit was fined five shillings. Our distaste for celebrating the season continues today: a recent poll of Massachusetts residents found that their number-one problem with the Commonwealth was its weather. As designers, we should consider our own attitudes toward winter, as they affect the way we build our cities. Our collective understanding of urban winters comes not only from our neighbors and weather forecasters, but also from a shared visual culture of winterscapes, especially those by well-known artists. Renoir famously asked: "Even if you can stand the cold, why paint snow? It is a blight on the face of Nature." Other artists have been able to get beyond the physical discomfort, darkness, and monotone to depict extraordinary and enjoyable aspects of the season. By looking at a tradition of urban winter scenes produced in Western Europe and the United States, we can examine some of the roots of our own prejudices and find opportunities in a season that is much maligned.

Before the Renaissance, artists rarely portrayed winter landscapes. Snow, slush, and darkness played little part in biblical and Edenic representations from the Middle Ages. Christianity's most famous winter celebration took its December 25th date merely to incorporate the Roman festival of the Unconquered Sun (*Dies Natalis Invicti Solis*). Even if winter weather figured in Judeo-Christian myth beyond the lowest circle of Dante's inferno, its precipitation would only have obscured the iconic subject matter. This purity of representation remains in our architectural renderings: we avoid winter scenes, as trees without leaves seem forsaken, and snow only hides our creations.

The first extant winterscape, *February* from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (page 54, right), was painted by the Limbourg Brothers relatively recently, between 1412 and 1416. Winter didn't make regular appearances until the Dutch Renaissance, when painters used the season to symbolize the limits of mortality and morality in their 16th- and 17th-century landscapes. Dutch paintings of canals full of skaters appear benign; however, their

Right: *Harriet and Leon* (1941), Allan Rohan Crite

ICE

Late Afternoon, New York: Winter (1900), Childe Hassam

undercurrents are pernicious. An inscription on an engraving from Breughel's study of skaters before the Gate of St. George in Antwerp reads, "*lubricitas vitae humanei*" — the "slipperiness of human life."

This association of winter with death became more literal in 19th-century prints of Parisian winters such as H. Meyer's *View of the boulevard Montmartre at one o'clock in the morning during the last snowstorm* (1881), in which carriages and horse carcasses are stuck in snowdrifts. Félix-Hilaire Buhot's *Winter in Paris* (1879–1880; facing page) exemplifies the horrors of an urban winter. The dead horses, homeless people huddling around a

In the short, blustery days of winter, all impressions of life become precious.

burning barrel, and skeletal dogs contrast with the manicured poodle and its warmly dressed owners. Winter was menacing and feared. A 19th-century New York journalist once described St. Paul, Minnesota, as a "Siberia, unfit for habitation." While snowplows, heating, and the long-distance shipping of food have mitigated physical danger, we still go to great lengths to avoid the season — sometimes literally, as in Montreal's 20 miles of underground tunnels or the West Edmonton Mall, which covers 24 city blocks. We find similar responses in Boston's Prudential Center and its recently constructed "winter garden," an interior glazed atrium with tropical plants that defies rather than celebrates its namesake.

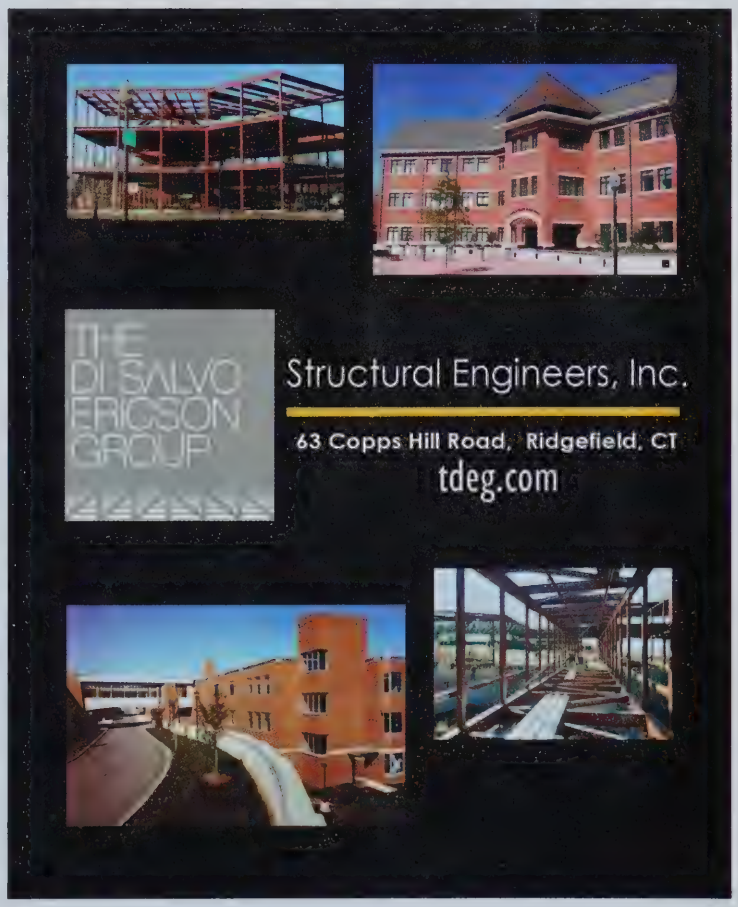
The Impressionists' winterscapes marked a shift in attitudes toward the season by presenting, even celebrating, its more sensuous qualities. This experiential aspect of Impressionism was initially obscured by the public's preconceptions of both painting technique and winter's atmospheric effects. Art critic Théodore Duret described how an Impressionist painter discovers winter light through observation: "He sees that, in the sunlight, the shadows on the snow are blue. Without hesitation, he paints blue shadows. So the public laughs, roars with laughter."

The Impressionists' keen observations also extended from capturing the physical essence of the scene to capturing the spirit of the place. Boston Impressionist Childe Hassam's last painting

February from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (1412–1416), Limbourg Brothers

before leaving the city, *A City Fairyland* (1886), depicts what is probably the South End. Well-dressed families, carriages, and trolleys track through fresh snow at that mercurial moment of winter dusk when spots of light from streetlamps become brighter than the diffuse winter sky. His *Late Afternoon, New York: Winter* (1900; facing page, left) also portrays a season infused with life and activity. Pedestrians move purposefully but unhurriedly through streets, falling snow reflects the soft pink blush of the setting sun, and the mass of the buildings recedes against the warm glow from the windows. Luminous highlights suggest a season of shared civic life, in which concertgoers walk together to performances, pubs beckon with warm drinks, and lights from nearby houses offer a reassuring sense of security and comfort. In the short, blustery days of winter, all impressions of life become precious. Helsinki has responded to the rareness of winter light by creating a city-wide lighting plan with 13 zoning types; the holiday lights on Boston's Commonwealth Mall now remain in place through the winter season, reinforcing the civic character of this great urban space. The value of human contact in severe weather is reflected in Boston's parallel cultural season of performances, exhibitions, and gala events, and in a strong civic life centered both on institutions such as the public library and symphony, and on myriad organizations charged with the responsibility to care for all living in our community.

Detail: *Winter in Paris* (1879–1880), Félix-Hilaire Buhot

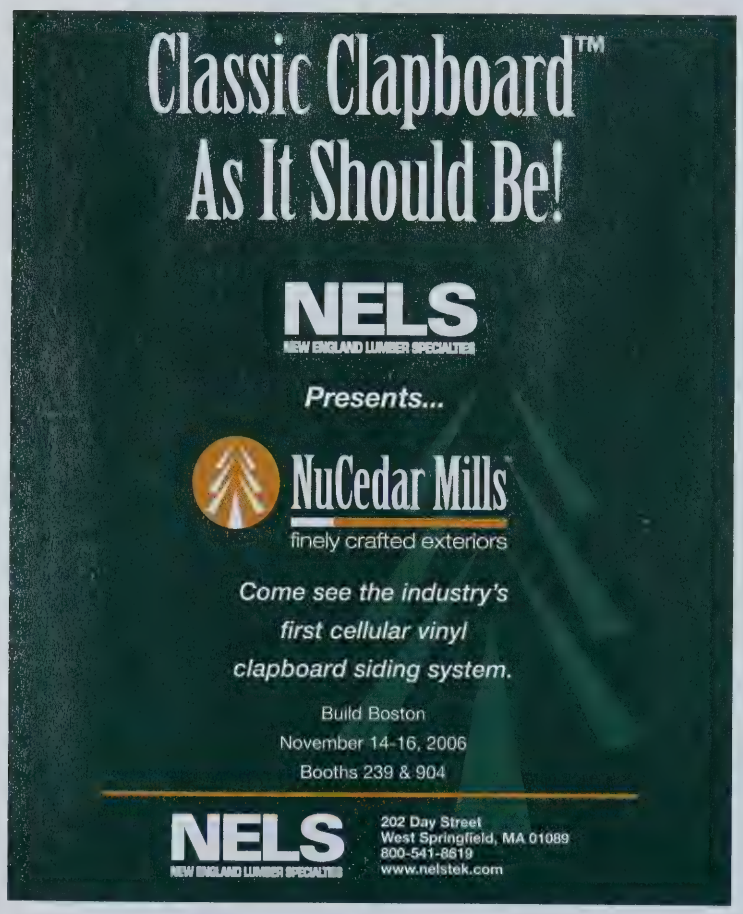


With Modernism came a very different presentation of winter. Rather than embracing its sensuousness, early-20th-century art took advantage of the season's striking formal qualities to neutralize its experiential qualities. Alfred Stieglitz created numerous prints of New York City during winter nights, combining a clean, severe contrast in tone with the pureness of Modernist art and design. Stieglitz's aim was to test the edge of technology, pushing photographic technique as well as capturing the spirit of the modern industrial world: "There was a tree — ice-covered, glistening — and the snow-covered sidewalk. Nothing comparable had been photographed before, under such conditions." The extreme conditions showcased technology's control over and defiance of climate, comparable to George Bellows' early-20th-century paintings of construction workers in snow-covered Manhattan.

Coatings of snow and ice gave themselves easily to minimalist abstractions, dematerializing everyday objects. Constructivist László Moholy-Nagy, well-known for his abstract photograms of household items, achieved a similar effect by taking a photo of a pathway through snow in Berlin (facing page). Sociologist Jeffrey Nash has observed in his study of parks in winter that people feel greater freedom in their use of the spaces — snow creates a blank field erasing the designer's intentions. This sense of a dematerialized winter world, and its resulting freedoms, has somewhat ironically been heightened by advances in technology that now allow us to assert unprecedented dominance over the weather: sophisticated climate-control systems, citrus flown from Florida, and full-spectrum lighting that encourages people to forget the season as well as their locale. Winter becomes at worst an occasional inconvenience and at best an interesting graphic abstraction.

However, a few contemporary artists have returned to using the season to reveal how we think of our environment, our community, and ourselves. Allan Rohan Crite has spent the last 70 years creating portraits of everyday life in Boston's South End, with the majority of his work depicting the color and activity of summer. In contrast, his portrait of an African-American couple, *Harriet and Leon* (1941; page 53), puts them against a wintery backdrop. Kids still play on the street, but their play seems reserved as they respectfully watch Harriet and Leon. Neat coats of snow line the rowhouses, dressing them as finely as the couple. As he celebrates the formal qualities of winter, Crite doesn't forget the season's strong associations with

Our climate is our identity. More significantly, our response to our climate is also our identity.



people and place: he has stated that he painted *Harriet and Leon* to show a middle-class African-American couple defying contemporary associations with "Southern sharecroppers or jazz musicians."

As *Harriet and Leon* suggests, our climate is our identity. More significantly, our response to our climate is also our identity. Winter in northern cities is an immutable fact and will always be a season of darkness and uncomfortable chills. But we can shape our response to winter, by better understanding the sources of age-old attitudes and by creatively finding and designing ways to exploit the season's special qualities and experiences. Boston's First Night is one example, an event that continuously moves us between cozy interiors and frigid exteriors, that is ruined if temperatures are too moderate to sustain ice sculptures, that rediscovers the sensuous pleasures of winter while promoting a new civic spirit. In improving our own environment, we should remember our distinctive and dignified New England responses to the climate, from efficiently packed Boston townhouses to heat-retaining box pews in colonial churches. As we reconsider the city in the context of a season that is increasingly defied by environmental technology and threatened by global warming, we should consider one simple possibility: winter is an opportunity. ■

Justin Crane, Assoc. AIA, is a designer at Cambridge Seven Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He co-chairs Common Boston, the BSA's AIA150 community-service initiative.

From the Radio Tower, Berlin (1928). László Moholy-Nagy

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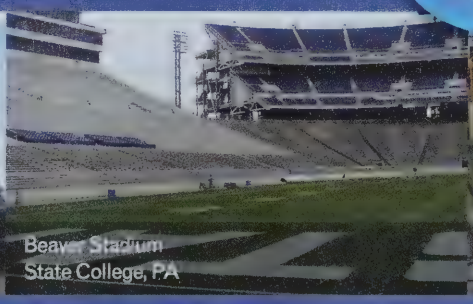
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Covering the Issues

Identity crisis... "What kind of genius are you?" asks Daniel Pink as he explains economist David Galenson's theory of creative minds (***Wired***, July 2006). Applying quantitative analysis, Galenson studies how and when innovators innovate. He argues that, no matter the discipline, creative minds fall into two categories: the "conceptual innovators" — those who take great creative leaps when they're young — and the "experimental innovators" — those who plod along, slowly making progress, reaching their creative stride much later in life. Mozart, Picasso, Maya Lin? All are conceptualists who did their truly innovative work while young. Beethoven, Cezanne, and Alfred Hitchcock, on the other hand, were experimenters whose best work came later. Galenson is a late-blooming experimenter. And you?

Dilbert, watch out... The office cube is about to change — at least if Lisa Takeuchi Cullen can predict what's to come ("Redrawing the Cube," ***Time***, July 17, 2006). The workstations of the future will be smaller and more personal, allowing increased control of noise, temperature, and view. Less individual space will be balanced by more group areas: cellphone booths, conversation pods, and in-house "common areas" that rival the local Starbucks. The goal is to accommodate flex time, overlapping schedules, and new team-based work habits. Cullen argues that the current standards were designed for the paper-pushing age; now, in the laptop era, it's time for new shapes, materials, and configurations.

Ever green... All-things-sustainable continue to make headlines. ***Newsweek*** jumped into the pool with Jerry Adler's "Going Green" cover story (July 17, 2006). Adler offers yet another series of sobering statistics addressed by yet another set of inspiring examples. There's the California architect who bikes to work, the Brooklyn hipster using recycled denim insulation in his townhouse renovation, the Detroit-based builder who refused to construct oversized vacation homes, the Massachusetts energy consultant designing residential solar arrays, and Manhattan's race to build the most sustainable skyscraper. Adler saves the critical question for the end: "You cannot save the world with anecdotes. Is the relevant statistic that sales of hybrid cars doubled last year to 200,000, or that they were outsold by SUVs by a ratio of 23-1?"

New history... What to do with an old Modern? As the great mid-century houses face the end of their first life, how should they face the future? What to restore, what to preserve, what to change, and how to finance it are some of the key questions posed by editor Stephen Zacks (***Metropolis***, August 2006). A collection of articles outlines the unique challenges faced by the owners of houses by Landis Gores, Paul Rudolph, William Krisel, and Eliot Noyes. One has been restored by an enthusiastic developer and sold for profit. Another was bought by a community to be converted to public use. A third has acquired a new landscape true to the original spirit. The family who grew up in the fourth (which includes Boston architect Frederick Noyes FAIA) is grappling with what to do, trying to balance stewardship with financial realities. Maybe it's time for *Dwell* readers to get serious.

A year in their lives... With the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, a number of publications have attempted to explain the aftermath. For an in-depth examination of how the political and physical are intertwined, check out "The Lost Year" by Dan Baum (***The New Yorker***, August 21, 2006). Baum tells the comprehensive story chronologically, putting architecture and planning in historical and cultural perspective by including background such as 1950s urban-renewal practices and the role of the shotgun house in New Orleans life. In "The Long, Strange Resurrection of New Orleans," Charles C. Mann takes an equally thorough, yet topical approach (***Fortune***, August 21, 2006). He discusses the political circus, the power plays, the mayoral election, and the problematic planning process, full of good intentions and completely lacking in political will. Critical of government actions at all levels, he finds hope for the city in the grassroots efforts of individuals. ■

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA, is a designer at Rogers Marvel Architects in New York City.

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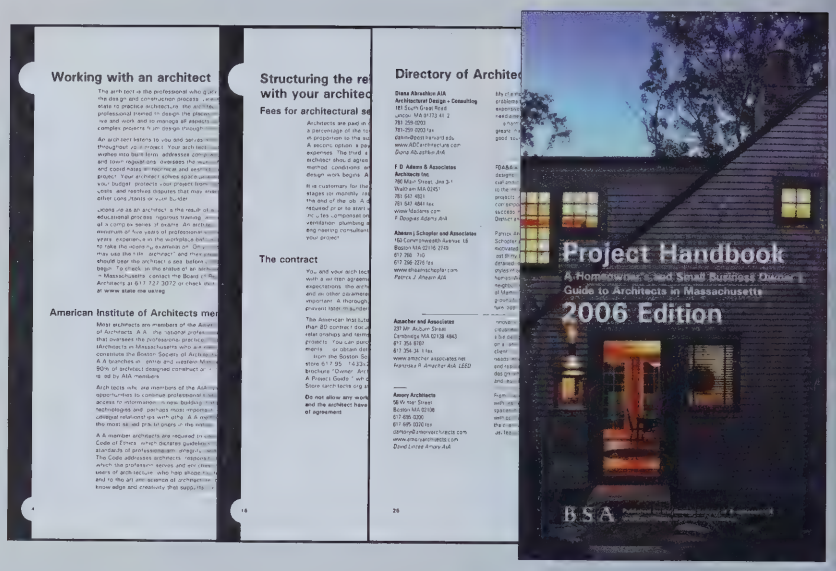

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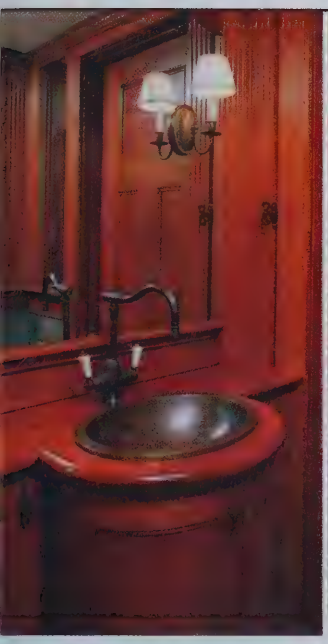

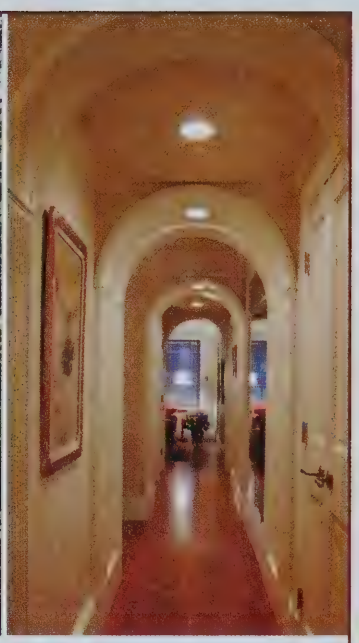

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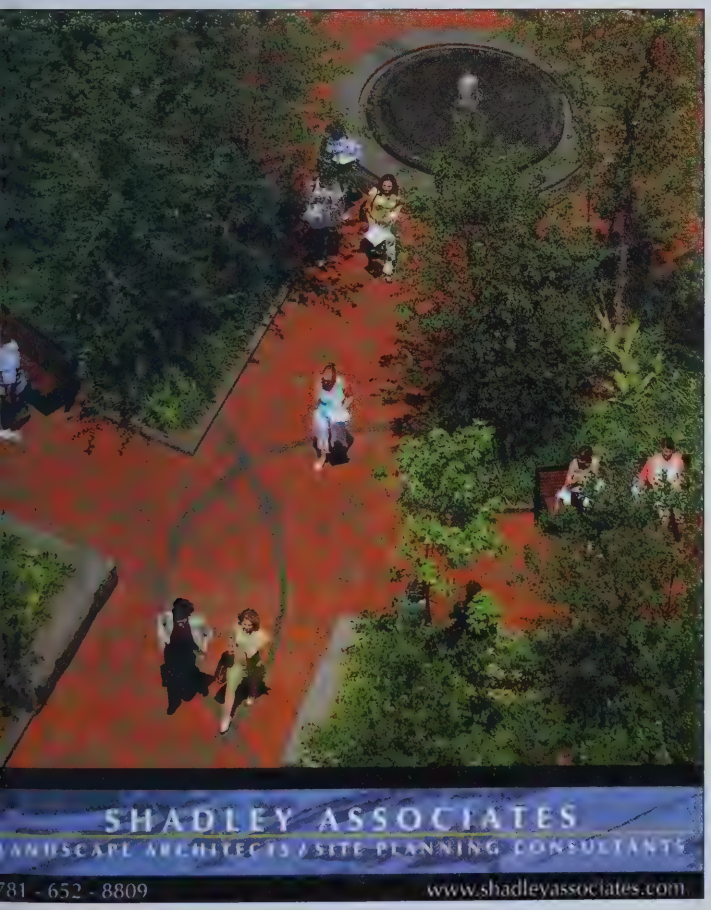

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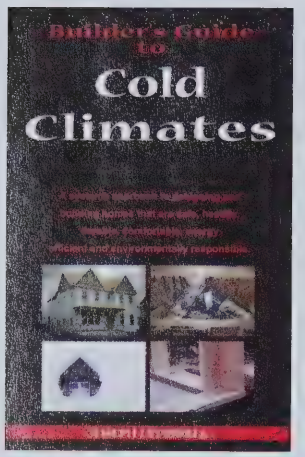


BUILDER'S GUIDE TO COLD CLIMATES
by Joseph Lstiburek PE
Building Science Press, 2004 (revised)

Joseph Lstiburek, one of the leading building scientists today, admits that he is a builder who has gone over to the "dark side" of building science. But in this guide, he makes complicated concepts quite understandable, offering a designer's guide as much as a "builder's guide."

How do you know if you're in a "cold climate"? Lstiburek includes his well-known and much-used climate region map, somewhat different from the Department of Energy's (DOE) eight-zone map because he overlays rain-loading and humidity in the definition of regions. Most of the Northeast falls into Lstiburek's "cold" zone, although parts of Maine are "very cold" and much of New Jersey is "mixed-humid." The distinctions are meaningful, and key to Lstiburek's approach to building science. (Other books in the series include guides to hot-dry/mixed-dry climates; mixed-humid climates; and hot/humid climates.)

The guide is based on Lstiburek's extensive experience as well as knowledge gained from building scientists in Canada, Norway, and Sweden, and DOE's Building America program. Updated from the original 2000 edition to include the latest thinking on vapor barriers and revised sections on roof, wall, and foundation design, it is a guide to high-performance buildings that can only be achieved through an integrated-systems approach.

Following a section introducing this approach and outlining recent changes in construction technology and building science, the book is divided into two parts: Design and Construction. Design first reviews "big picture" choices, from site selection to building shape and orientation and basic systems.

This section then presents building-science concepts, including material properties, and compares the performance of different wall, roof, and basement assemblies. It includes an excellent review of the benefits of rainscreen versus barrier design, and the discussion of air-barrier systems and details is quite rich. The discussion of air-leakage rates is at the cutting edge. The presentation of issues related to control of water-vapor diffusion and drying balance is clear and includes Lstiburek's classification of materials into vapor retarder and permeance categories — the subject of proposed code changes today.

The second section, Construction, focuses on specific building elements. Each chapter begins with an introduction of general concerns, followed by specific recommendations, details, and solutions to common problems.

Lstiburek's guides are known for their clarity and their accessible (even humorous) language. The graphics are one of their biggest strengths: clear drawings and abundant details help the reader to quickly understand the concepts.

Although the guide's focus is residential design, the underlying building-science principles apply to every building and include the latest thinking on high-performance buildings. This book is a "must have" for every architect's library.

Wagdy Anis AIA, LEED AP, is a principal with Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott in Boston, and chair of the Building Enclosure Technology and Environment Council of the National Institute of Building Sciences.

THE CAPE COD COTTAGE
by William Morgan
Princeton Architectural Press, 2006

This survey of Cape Cod cottages is a sweet book; much like its subject, its restraint makes it more profound than its more elaborate peers. The story it tells is New England's story — the story of creating a sense of place and a sense of home.

The Cape Cod cottage fits its climate: tight eaves and minimal trim close the corners; overlapping shingles shed the rain and snow; and the great central chimney radiates heat all winter. But more than just appropriate engineering, the Cape is about shelter in a deeper sense. Indeed, what could be more "house" than a Cape house? As the author points out, what child hasn't drawn the Cape with its face of two eye-windows, one door-mouth, and a chimney-hat with smoke curling out? And what image seems more New England, more rooted in its place? The Cape's utility and compactness belie its power.

Morgan tracks the history of the Cape from its 17th-century roots to contemporary versions in a brief and informative essay. His artful black-and-white images follow the text, forming the bulk of the book and giving the reader a fine visual survey of this enduring form.

The form of the Cape has resisted modification. Additions typically honor the primary structure and grow from the back

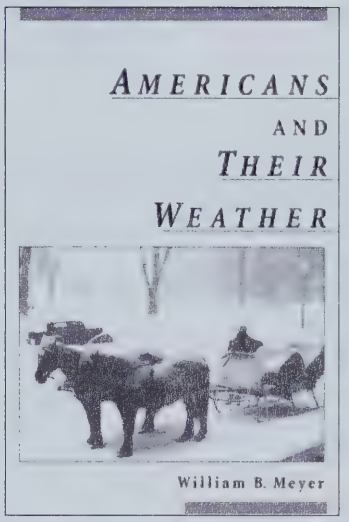
with wings, sheds, and ells; the Fairbanks House in Dedham, Massachusetts, is one well-known example. In the early 19th century, housewrights slightly modified the Cape to fit the Greek lines then coming into fashion. Instead of aligning the long axis of the building parallel with the street with an entrance under the eave, the Greek Revival housewrights turned their buildings 90 degrees and faced the gable to the street. This simple shift turned the cottage into a temple.

The Cape is alive and well. The book reminds us of the power of the 20th-century versions by architect Royal Barry Wills, which, curiously, seem more authentic than the 17th-century forms he was emulating. Wills' architectural skill and deep understanding of the Cape merit review.

As architectural historian Vincent Scully has shown, Robert Venturi presented a new approach with projects like the Trubeck and Wislocki houses on the sandy dunes of Nantucket. These two houses are among the best of Postmodern buildings, with their appealingly awkward self-consciousness and love of asymmetry. Venturi understood that the essence of the Cape is its compact tightness and showed that the old form still has plenty for architects to explore.

The introduction by New England architect Dan Scully extols the virtues of the simple life embodied in the Cape type. He sees the Cape as the original anti-McMansion. The enduring presence of the Cape, however, depends not so much on its reflection of the simple life, but on its ability to accommodate our increasingly complex lives.

John B. Tittmann AIA is a principal of Albert, Righter & Tittmann, Architects in Boston.



AMERICANS AND THEIR WEATHER
by William B. Meyer
Oxford University Press, 2000

The history of weather tells how physical phenomena can be transformed from resource to hazard and back again. Snow-packed roads facilitated horse-drawn

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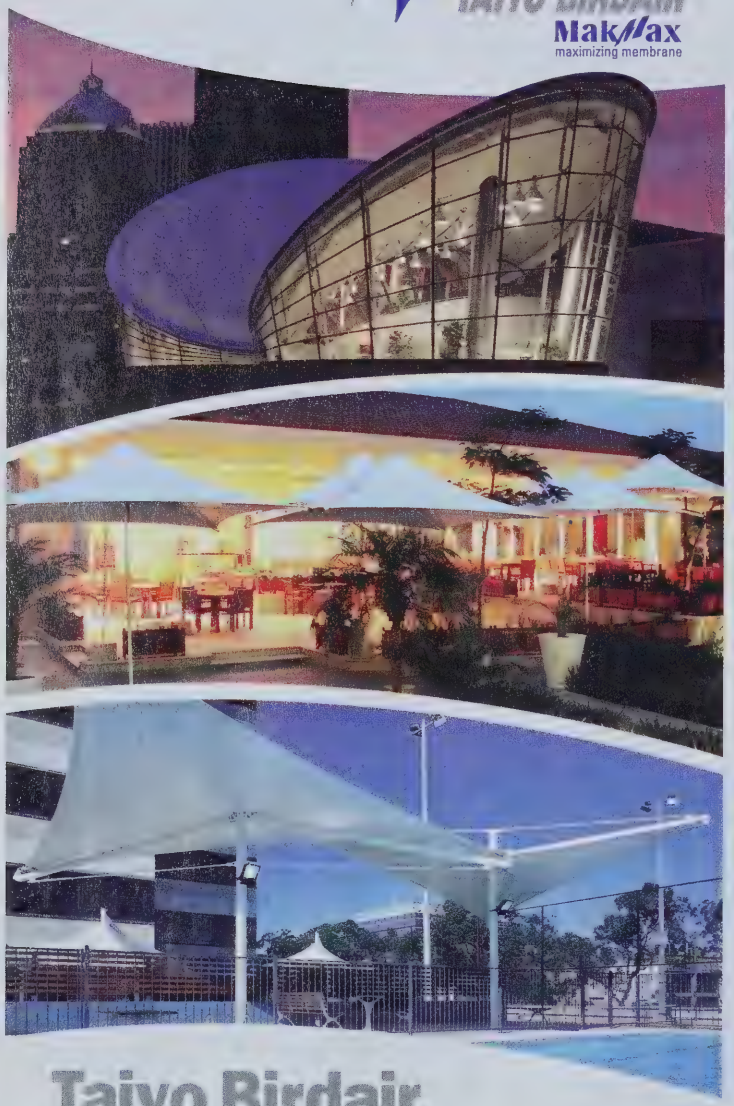

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carriages and sleighs in the 19th century, while modern commuters, traveling greater distances between home and work, find snowy roads dangerous and thus anxiety-provoking. Winters are both good and bad for New England's economy. Furious coastal storms are bad for fishermen and great for ski-area operators. Weather conditions in all seasons inspire the development of tools for physical relief (umbrellas and sunglasses) as well as social and economic relief (weather forecasting, insurance, disaster assistance). With the current focus on global warming and natural disasters, weather discussions have become a simmering caldron of science, romantic interpretation, and tall tales.

In this book, William Meyer, an associate professor of geography at Colgate University, offers remarkably clear insights into the historical relationship between Americans and their weather, from the early colonists planning according to the climate they mistakenly expected (identical to that of England) to the post-World War II migration to warmer climates when, for the first time, weather as an amenity influenced decisions as to where to live. Meyer addresses head-on the issue of climatic determinism, the belief that weather shapes people's lives, whether they are aware of it or not. He is critical of Thomas Jefferson for "retailing an error" that one can tell the character of people by the latitude in which they live: Northerners as "cool, sober, laborious" and Southerners as "fiery, voluptuary, and indolent." He also undermines some of the murkier prescriptions of environmentalists who urge that activities in an area conform to what nature intended. Nature, as Meyer insists, has no intentions. It simply is!

To dispel the idea that residential design develops determinately in relation to prevailing weather conditions, Meyer deploys the Gothic Revival style as promoted by Andrew Jackson Downing in the mid-19th century, with its dark paint, steep roofs, and small windows, so badly adapted to summer breezes and winter sun. Not to mention the proliferation of Cape Cod Colonials in California, and Spanish Mission in the Northeast.

One of Meyer's most engaging presentations is his take on post-World War II "climatic boosterism" led by sloganeering entrepreneurs who recast Florida, long thought to be too swampy for year-round human habitation, as a paradise for retirees. California, offering cooler summers and lower humidity than Florida, attracted young families, their livelihoods no longer controlled by agricultural production or place-based activities. This freedom to relocate, based on weather as an amenity, disproves the moribund idea that for most people "where one was born and lives is the best place in the world, no matter how forsaken a hole it may appear to an outsider."

Phyllis Andersen is a landscape historian in Boston.

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http://strangeweather.info
An online community for artists, writers, and activists dedicated to environmental issues, such as manmade disasters, global warming, and design. The architecture section includes a link to a Swiss project that is composed of 300 infrared bulbs and weather feeds from the Tropic of Capricorn, allowing spectators to experience never-ending summer. Whatever gets you through.

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www.aceee.org
The ACEEE promotes energy efficiency as a means to economic prosperity and environmental protection. It also provides a home-energy checklist for consumers. Who knew that an unmade waterbed was an energy guzzler? Pull up those sheets and blankets!

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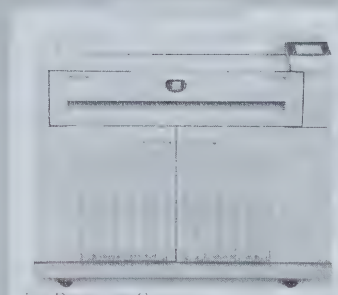

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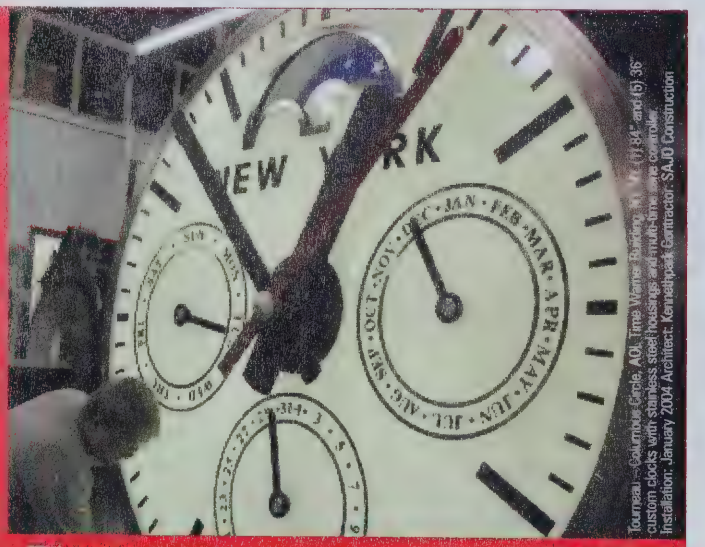

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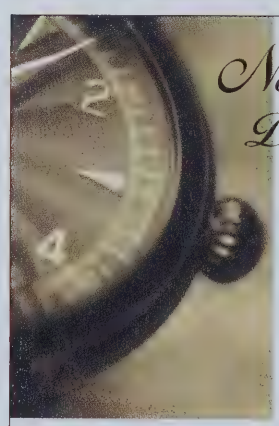

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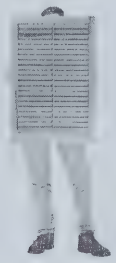

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Colby College

"**One must have** a mind of winter," Wallace Stevens writes in his poem "The Snow Man," and I, ever drawn to dialogue, respond, "I do. That's *exactly* what I have."

"And have been cold a long time," the poem continues.

"Cold? I'm freezing," I say. I'm a Maine resident, after all, one with Raynaud's Syndrome, a minor circulatory disorder that makes my toes and fingers numb easily.

"To behold the junipers shagged with ice,/The spruces rough in the distant glitter/ Of the January sun."

Stevens' poem shifts, but I stay with these lines, busily disagreeing. The coldness of my home state hampers exploratory perception. Or it hampers mine. Ice on the roads, snow coming down. Best to stay in.

I don't ski and I don't skate, though I do shove my son down sledding hills. I have a pair of snowshoes, and I occasionally tromp around a field, while complaining that I am the only person in the world whose nose has Raynaud's. In general, though, I scuttle from one interior space — my home, my car, my office — to another. Not that I can completely indulge my disinclination to go out, as I live 64 miles from Colby College, where I teach fiction writing.

I try to pack as much as possible into my two days a week on campus. Mornings of paperwork lead to afternoons of classes, then multiple meetings. I get nervous when I bump into a friend in the hallway — I've got the desire, but not the time, to chat. I've got a mind of winter, all right. I never look up and see anything.

Except...when I make my way down from my office and out the doors of Miller Library. The library — with its cupola and clock tower — sits at the center of Colby's hilltop campus in Waterville, Maine. I often leave Miller with only one minute to get to the neighboring building where my classes are held. And yet as soon as I step outside, I stop. I'm out in the cold and willing, or willed, to look. From where I stand — between the giant pillars of Miller Library's portico (where unrepentant smokers do their unrepentant smoking) — the view is expansive. The campus quadrangle descends — by stairs, stretches of lawn, more stairs, more stretches of lawn — to the faraway street, and then far beyond the campus to the forest (where Colby has its nature preserve) and the more distant forest (which hides Waterville's homes but reveals a lone smokestack). I might want to pause here — and think about the paper mill that once employed the town and polluted its air and river — but my view is drawn farther still to the hills in the distance, just north of the more famous Camden Hills. Sight stops here, but I always *sense* what is beyond: the open promise of the sea.

I've spent a summer in Switzerland, so can I say this is a stunning view? Not really, but it is big and inspiring. It does something to my mind of winter, which is so short-sighted. Looking, I slow down. I take a breath. It's the view — not the lesson plan in my hand — that makes me ready to teach.

I have been in attractive buildings in winter, but I don't remember them the way I remember looking *out* of buildings in winter. I think of an ugly academic building in Madison, Wisconsin, which offers a starkly pretty view of the icy reaches of the lake it borders.

In winter, I want to be *situated* for a significant view. In the summer, I don't really care. A summer view may give me broadness, but then so does a summer day. In the cold, I need help. It might come in the form of a window, but where I work, it comes in the form of a building setting itself on high, so that its denizens can discover (for isn't this what an undergraduate education is all about?) the outside world. ■

Debra Spark is the author of the novels *Coconuts for the Saint* and *The Ghost of Bridgetown*. Her most recent book is *Curious Attractions: Essays on Fiction Writing*.

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